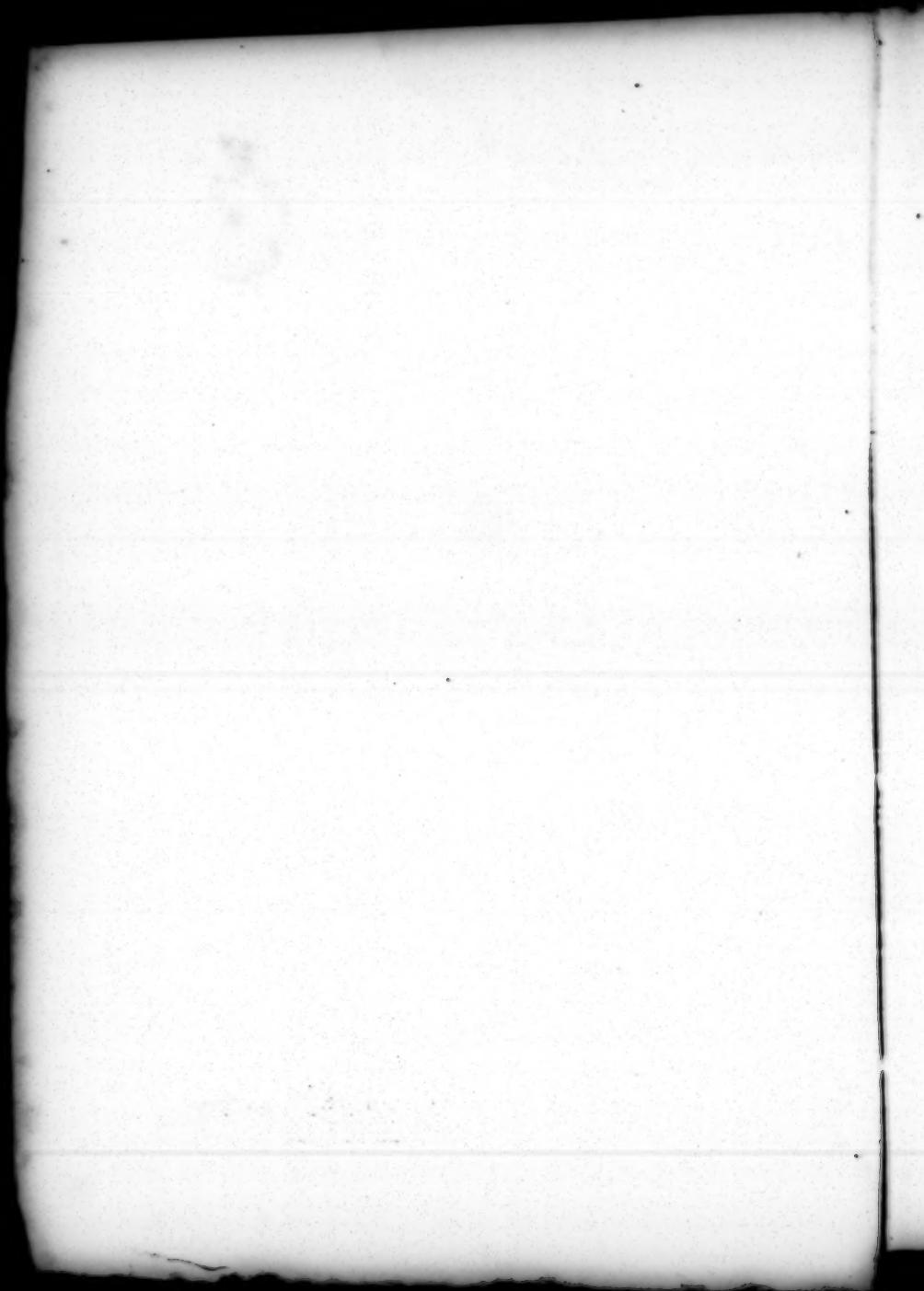




Stedman del.

W. P. sculp.

Printed for John Bell near Exeter Exchange Strand London Nov: 30th 1777.



THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN MILTON.

FROM THE TEXT OF DR. NEWTON.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

AND A CRITIQUE ON PARADISE LOST,

BY JOSEPH ADDISON, ESQ.

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England, did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpass;
The next in majesty; in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go:
To make a third she join'd the former two.

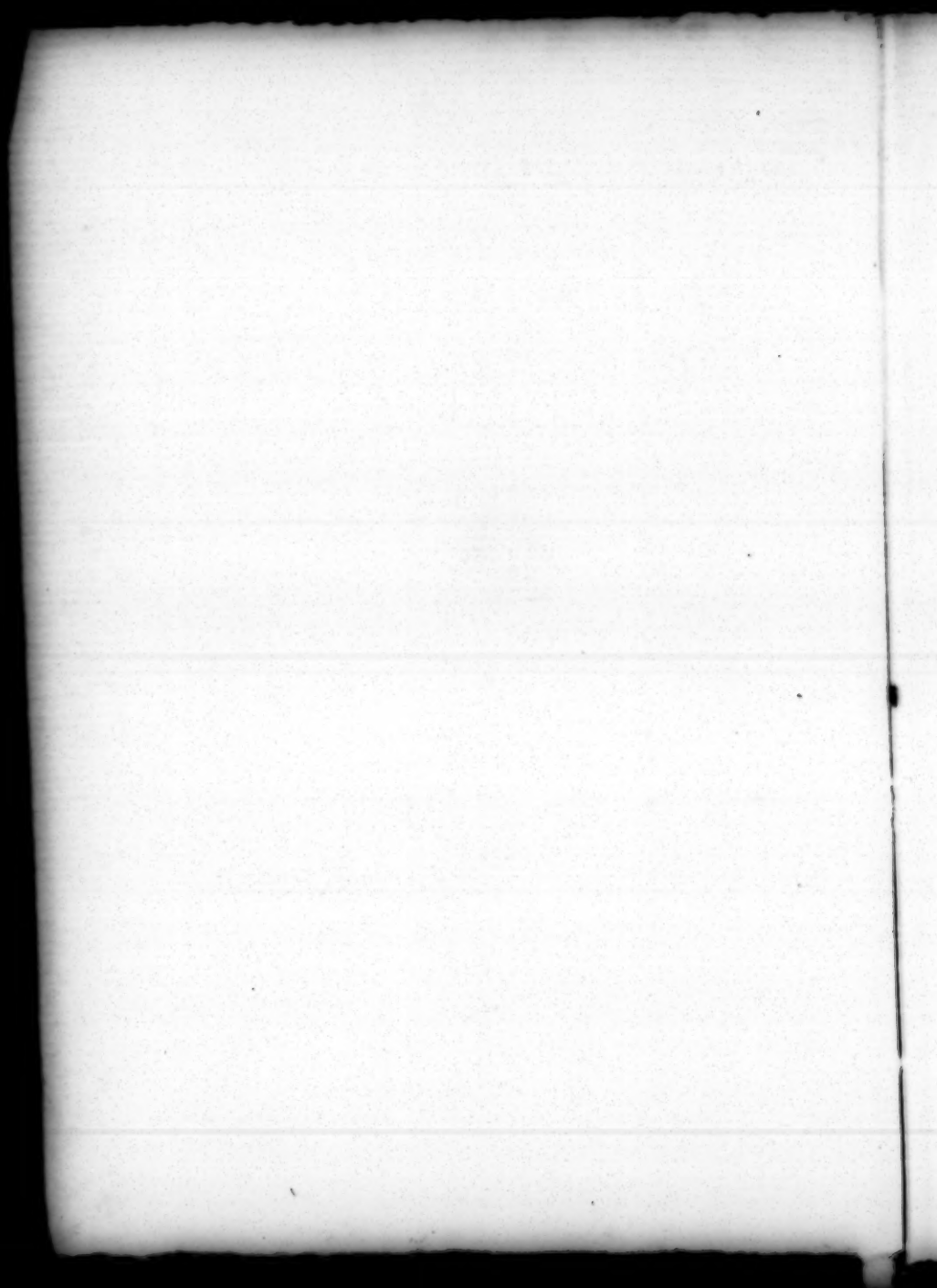
DRYDEN.

VOL. III.

EDINBURG:

AT THE *Apollo Press*, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1779.



THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN MILTON.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING
PARADISE REGAIN'D.

A POEM IN FOUR BOOKS.

TOGETHER WITH

SAMSON AGONISTES,	IL PENSEROSO,
COMUS,	ARCADES,
L'ALLEGRO,	LYCIDAS.

Milton----with high and haughty stalks,
Unfetter'd, in majestic numbers walks:
No vulgar hero can his Muse engage,
Nor earth's wide scene confine his hallow'd rage.
See! see! he upward springs, and, tow'ring high,
Spurns the dull province of mortality;
Shakes heav'n's eternal throne with dire alarms,
And sets th' almighty Thunderer in arms!

ADDISON.

EDINBURG:
AT THE *Apollo Press*, BY THE MARTINS.
Anno 1779.



PREFACE.

[Extracted from Dr. Newton's Octavo Edition of 1773.]

IT hath been recommended to me by some great persons, as well as by several friends, to complete the edition of *Milton's Poetical Works*: for though the *Paradise Lost* be the flower of epic poetry, and the noblest effort of genius, yet here are other poems which are no less excellent in their kind, and if they have not that sublimity and majesty, are at least equally beautiful and pleasing to the imagination. And the same method that was taken in the publication of the *Paradise Lost*, is pursued in this edition of the *Paradise Regain'd* and other Poems, to exhibit the true and genuine text according to *Milton's* own editions. Of the *Paradise Regain'd* and *Samson Agonistes* there was only one edition in *Milton's* life-time, in the year 1671; and this we have made our standard, correcting only what the Author himself would have corrected. Dr. Bentley pronounces it to be without faults, but there is a large table of errata at the end, which instead of being emended, have rather been augmented in the following editions, and were never corrected in any edition that I have seen before the present. Of the other Poems there were two editions in *Milton's* life-time, the first in 1645, before he was blind, and the other with some additions in 1673. Of the *Mask* there was likewise an edition published by Mr. Henry Lawes in 1637: and of the *MS.*

and several other poems there are extant copies in Milton's own hand writing, preserved in the library of Trinity College in Cambridge: and all these copies and editions have been carefully collated and compared together. The Manuscript, indeed, hath been of singular service in rectifying several passages, and especially in the Sonnets, some of which were not printed till many years after Milton's death, and were then printed imperfect and deficient both in sense and metre, but are now, by the help of the Manuscript, restored to their just harmony and original perfection.

The Latin poems I cannot say are equal to several of his English compositions: but yet they are not without their merit; they are not a cento, like most of the modern Latin poetry; there is spirit, invention, and other marks and tokens of a rising genius; for it should be considered, that the greater part of them were written while the Author was under twenty. They are printed correctly, according to his own editions in 1645 and 1673.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK I.

I who ere while the happy Garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradife to all mankind,
By one Man's firm obedience fully try'd
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd 5
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls'd,
And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness.

Thou Spi'rit who ledst this glorious cremite
Into the desert, his victorious field,
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof th' undoubted Son of God, inspire, 11
As thou art wont, my prompted song else mute,
And bear through highth or depth of Nature's bounds
With prosp'rous wing full summ'd, to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done, 15
And unrecorded left through many an age,
Worthy to' have not remain'd so long unsung.

Now had the great Proclamer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cry'd
Repentance, and Heav'n's kingdom nigh at hand 20
To all baptis'd: to his great baptism flock'd
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd
To the flood Jordan, came as then obscure,

Unmark'd, unknown; but him the Baptist soon 25
Descry'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his heav'nly office, nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd: on him baptis'd
Heav'n open'd, and in likeness of a dove 30
The Spi'rit descended, while the Father's voice
From Heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adversary, who roving still
About the world, at that assembly sam'd
Would not be last, and with the voice divine 35
Nigh thunder-struck, th' exalted Man, to whom
Such high attest was giv'n, a while survey'd
With wonder, then with envy fraught and rage
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers, 40
Within thick clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy consistory; and them amidst
With looks aghast and sad he thus bespake.

O ancient Pow'rs of Air and this wide world,
For much more willingly I mention Air, 45
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
Our hated habitation; well ye know
How many ages, as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd, and rul'd
In manner at our will th' affairs of Earth, 50
Since Adam and his facil consort Eve
Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me, though since

With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the Seed of Eve
Upon my head: long the decrees of Heav'n 55
Delay, for longest time to him is short;
And now too soon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long threaten'd wound,
At least if so we can, and by the head 60
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infring'd, our freedom and our being,
In this fair empire won of Earth and Air;
For this ill news I bring, the Woman's Seed
Destin'd to this, is late of woman born: 65
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
But his growth now to youth's full flower, displaying
All virtue, grace, and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great prophet, to proclame 70
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
'To do him honor as their king; all come, 75
And he himself among them was baptiz'd,
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony' of Heav'n, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt; I saw
The prophet do him reverence, on him rising 80

Out of the water, Heav'n above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors, thence on his head
A perfect dove descend, whate'er it meant,
And out of Heav'n the Sov'ran voice I heard,
This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd. 85
His mother then is mortal, but his Sire
He who obtains the monarchy of Heav'n,
And what will he not do to' advance his Son?
His first-begot we know, and fore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the Deep; 90
Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate, 95
But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
Not force, but well-couch'd fraud, well woven snares,
Ere in the head of nations he appear
Their king, their leader, and supreme on Earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook 100
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam, and th' exploit perform'd
Successfully; a calmer voyage now
Will waite me; and the way found prosp'rous once
Induces best to hope of like success. 105

He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to th' infernal crew,
Distracted and surpris'd with deep dismay

At these sad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief: 110
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprize
To him their great dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march 115
From Hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents and potentates, and kings, yea gods
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles, 120
Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
This Man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try;
So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
'To end his reign on Earth so long enjoy'd: 125
But contrary unweeting he fulfill'd
The purpos'd counsel pre-ordain'd and fix'd
Of the Most High, who in full frequency bright
Of angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.
Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold, 130
Thou and all angels conversant on Earth
With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son 135
Great in renown, and call'd the Son of God;

Then toldst her doubting how these things could be
To her a virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O'er-shadow' her: this Man born and now up-grown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine 141
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan; let him tempt and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng 145
Of his apostasy; he might have learnt
Less overweening since he fail'd in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a Man 150
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
Winning by conquest what the first man lost
By fallacy surpris'd. But first I mean 155
To exercise him in the wilderness,
There he shall first lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
By humiliation and strong sufferance: 160
His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
That all the angels and ethereal powers,
They now, and men hereafter may discern,

From what consummate virtue I have chose 165
This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men.

So spake th' eternal Father, and all Heav'n
Admiring stood a space, then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures mov'd, 170
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory and triumph to the Son of God
Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles. 175
The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untry'd,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate all ye stratagems of Hell, 180
And devilish machinations come to nought.

So they in Heav'n their odes and vigils tun'd:
Mean while the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodg'd in Bethabara where John baptiz'd,
Musing and much revolving in his breast, 185
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish his Godlike office now mature,
One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading,
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse 190
With Solitude, till far from track of men;
Thought following thought, and step by step led on,

He enter'd now the bord'ring desert wild,
And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
His holy meditations thus pursu'd. 195

O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compar'd! 200
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth, 205
All righteous things: therefore above my years,
The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection, that ere yet my age
Had measur'd twice six years, at our great feast 210
I went into the temple, there to hear
The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own;
And was admir'd by all; yet this not all
To which my spi'rit aspir'd; victorious deeds 215
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
Then to subdue and quell o'er all the Earth
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd: 220

Yet held it more humane, more heav'nly first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make Persuasion do the work of Fear;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul
Not wilfully mis-doing, but unaware 225
Mised; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving
By words at times cast forth inly rejoic'd,
And said to me apart, High are thy thoughts
O Son, but nourish them and let them soar 230
To what highth sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire.
For know, thou art no son of mortal man;
Though men esteem thee low of parentage, 235
Thy Father is th' eternal King who rules
All Heav'n and Earth, angels and sons of men;
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceiv'd in me a virgin, he foretold
Thou should'st be great, and sit on David's throne,
And of thy kingdom there should be no end. 241
At thy nativity a glorious quire
Of angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung
To shepherds watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born, 245
Where they might see him, and to thee they came,
Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,
For in the inn was left no better room :

A star, not seen before, in Heav'n appearing
Guided the Wise Men thither from the East, 250
To honor thee with incense, myrrh, and gold,
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star new grav'n in Heaven,
By which they knew the King of Israel born.
Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warn'd 255
By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake
Before the altar and the vested priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood.
'This having heard, strait I again resolv'd
'The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ 260
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay ev'n to the death,
Ere I the promis'd kingdom can attain, 265
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.
Yet neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
'The time prefix'd I waited, when behold
'The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard, 270
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah and his way prepare.
I as all others to his baptism came,
Which I believ'd was from above; but he
Strait knew me, and with loudest voice proclam'd
Me him (for it was shown him so from Heaven) 276

Me him whose harbinger he was; and first
Refus'd on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won:
But as I rose out of the laving stream, 280
Heav'n open'd her eternal doors, from whence
The Spi'rit descended on me like a dove,
And last the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounc'd me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone 285
He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
Th' authority which I deriv'd from Heav'n.
And now by some strong motion I am led 290
Into this wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.

So spake our Morning Star then in his rise,
And looking round on every side beheld 295
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades;
The way he came not having mark'd, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come 300
Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.
Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night

Under the covert of some ancient oak, 305
Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,
Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last
Among wild beasts: they at his sight grew mild, 310
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
The fiery serpent fled, and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glar'd aloof.
But now an aged man in rural weeds,
Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray ewe, 315
Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Pecus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake. 320
Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan? for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His carcass, pin'd with hunger and with drouth. 325
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the Man whom late
Our new baptizing Prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honor'd so, and call'd thee Son
Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes 330
Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
To town or village nigh (nighest is far)

Where ought we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new; Fame also finds us out.

To whom the Son of God. Who brought me hither,
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek. 336

By miracle he may, reply'd the swain,
What other way I see not, for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
More than the camel, and to drink go far, 340
Men to much misery and hardship born;
But if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread,
So shalt thou save thyself and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste. 345

He ended, and the Son of God reply'd.
Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God? who fed, 350
Our fathers here with manna? In the mount
Moses was forty days, nor ate nor drank;
And forty days Elijah without food
Wander'd this barren waste; the same I now:
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust, 355
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?

Whom thus answer'd th' Arch-fiend now undis-
'Tis true, I am that spirit unfortunate, [guis'd.
Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt
Kept not my happy station, but was driven 360
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,

Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
By rigor unconniving, but that oft
Leaving my dolorous prison I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of Earth 365
Or range in th' air, nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth; 370
And when to all his angels he propos'd
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibb'd with lies 375
To his destruction, as I had in charge,
For what he bids I do : though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire 380
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous, I should so have lost all sense.
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent 385
Thy wisdom, and behold thy Godlike deeds?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind : why should I? they to me
Never did wrong or violence; by them
I lost not what I lost, rather by them 390

I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell
Copartner in these regions of the world,
If not disposer; lend them of my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents and dreams, 395
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe.
At first it may be; but long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof, 400
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens ought each man's peculiar load.
Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd:
This wounds me most (what can it less?) that man,
Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more. 405

To whom our Saviour sternly thus reply'd.
Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns: thou com'st indeed, 410
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendor, now depos'd,
Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,
A spectacle of ruin or of scorn 415
To all the host of Heav'n: the happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
Rather inflames thy torment, representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,

So never more in Hell than when in Heav'n. 420
But thou art serviceable to Heav'n's King.
Wilt thou impute to' obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to' afflict him 425
With all inflictions? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all oracles 430
By thee are giv'n, and what confess'd more true
Among the nations? that hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
Ambiguous and with double sense deluding, 435
Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
And not well understood as good not known?
Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct
To fly or follow what concern'd him most, 440
And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
For God hath justly giv'n the nations up
To thy delusions; justly since they fell
Idolatrous: but when his purpose is
Among them to declare his providence 445
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from him or his angels president
In every province? who themselves disdaining

'To' approach thy temples, give thee in command
What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say 450
To thy adorers; thou with trembling fear,
Or like a fawning parasite obey'ft;
'Then to thyself ascrib'ft the truth foretold.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse 455
The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceas'd,
And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos or elsewhere,
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent his Living Oracle 460
Into the world to teach his final will,
And sends his Spi'rit of Truth henceforth to dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know.

So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend, 465
Though inly stung with anger and disdain
Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd.

Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
But misery hath wrested from me: where 470
Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not enforc'd oft-times to part from truth;
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
But thou art plac'd above me, thou art Lord: 475
From thee I can and must submit endure
Check or reproof, and glad to 'scape so quit.

Hard are the ways of Truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discours'd, pleasing to th' ear,
And tuneable as Sylvan pipe or song; 480

What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire
Virtue, who follow not her lore: permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)
And talk at least, though I despair to' attain. 485

Thy Father, who is holy, wife and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread his sacred courts, and minister
About his altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice 490
To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
Inspir'd; disdain not such access to me.

To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow.
Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st 495
Permission from above; thou canst not more.

He added not; and Satan bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
Into thin air diffus'd: for now began
Night with her sullen wings to double-shade 500
The desert; fowls in their clay nests were couch'd;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

The End of the First Book.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK II.

MEAN while the new-baptiz'd, who yet remain'd
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
Jesus Messiah Son of God declar'd,
And on that high authority had believ'd, 5
And with him talk'd, and with him lodg'd, I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others though in holy Writ not nam'd,
Now missing him their joy so lately found,
So lately found, and so abruptly gone, 10
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt:
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the mount, and missing long; 15
And the great Tishbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to Heav'n, yet once again to come.
Therefore as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho 20
The city' of Palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
Machærus, and each town or city wall'd
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
Or in Peræa; but return'd in vain.

Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek, 25
Where winds with reeds and osiers whisp'ring play,
Plain fishermen, no greater men them call,
Close in a cottage low together got,
'Their unexpected loss and complaints out-breath'd.

Alas, from what high hope to what relapse 30
Unlook'd for are we fall'n! our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth;
Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand, 35
'The kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd;
'Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze:

For whither is he gone, what accident
Hath wrapt him from us? will he now retire 40
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israël,
Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come;
Behold the kings of th' Earth how they oppress
'Thy chosen, to what highth their power unjust 45
'They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee; arise and vindicate

Thy glory, free thy people from their yoke.
But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,
Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him, 50
By his great Prophet, pointed at and shown
In public, and with him we have convers'd;

Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his Providence; he will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recal, 55
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence;
Soon we shall see our Hope, our Joy return.

Thus they out of their complaints new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought:
But to his mother Mary, when she saw 60
Others return from baptism, not her son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.

O what avails me now that honor high 66
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute
Hail highly favor'd, among women blest!
While I to sorrows am no less advanc'd,
And fears as eminent, above the lot 70
Of other women, by the birth I bore,
In such a season born when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air; a stable was our warmth,
A manger his; yet soon enforc'd to fly 75
Thence into Egypt, till the murd'rous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem;
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years; his life 80

Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
 Little suspicious to any king; but now
 Full grown to man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
 By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
 Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice; 85
 I look'd for some great change; to honor? no,
 But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
 That to the fall and rising he should be
 Of many in Israel, and to a sign
 Spoken against, that through my very soul 90
 A sword shall pierce; this is my favor'd lot,
 My exaltation to afflictions high;
 Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
 I will not argue that, nor will repine.
 But where delays he now? some great intent 95
 Conceals him: when twelve years he scarce had seen,
 I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
 He could not lose himself; but went about
 His Father's business; what he meant I mus'd,
 Since understand; much more his absence now 100
 Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
 But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
 My heart hath been a store-house long of things
 And say'ings laid up, portending strange events.
 Thus Mary pond'ring oft, and oft to mind 105
 Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
 Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
 Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:

The while her Son tracing the desert wild,
Sole but with holiest meditations fed 110
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set;
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on Earth, and mission high:
For Satan with sly preface to return 115
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his potentates in council sat;
There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank he thus began. 120

Princes, Heav'n's ancient Sons, ethereal Thrones,
Demonian Spirits now, from th' element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd
Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath,
So may we hold our place and these mild seats 125
Without new trouble; such an enemy
Is risen to invade us, who no less
Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequency was impower'd, 130
Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but find
Far other labor to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam first of men,
Though Adam by his wife's allurements fell,
However to this Man inferior far, 135
If he be man by mother's side at least,

With more than human gifts from Heav'n adorn'd,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.

Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence 140

Of my success with Eve in Paradise

Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure

Of like succeeding here; I summon all

Rather to be in readiness, with hand

Or counsel to assist; lest I who erst 145

Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.

So spake th' old Serpent doubting, and from all

With clamor was assur'd their utmost aid

At his command; when from amidst them rose

Belial, the dissoluteſt ſpi'rit that fell, 150

The ſensualleſt, and after Aſmodai

The ſleſthlieſt incubus, and thus advis'd.

Set women in his eye, and in his walk,

Among daughters of men the faireſt found;

Many are in each region paſſing fair 155

As the noon ſky; more like to goddeſſes

Than mortal creatures, graceful and diſcreet,

Expert in amorous arts, inchanting tongues

Persuaſive, virgin majeſty with mild

And ſweet allay'd, yet terrible to' approach, 160

Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw

Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.

Such object hath the power to ſoft'n and tame

Severeſt temper, ſmooth the rugged'ſt brow,

Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve, 165
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resoluteſt breaſt,
As the magnetic hardeſt iron draws.
Women, when nothing elſe, beguil'd the heart
Of wiſeſt Solomon, and made him build, 170
And made him bow to the gods of his wives.

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd.
Belial, in much uneven ſcale thou weigh'ſt
All others by thyſelf; becauſe of old
Thou thyſelf doat'ſt on womankind, admiring 175
Their ſhape, their color, and attractive grace,
None are, thou think'ſt, but taken with ſuch toys.
Before the flood thou with thy luſty crew,
False titled Sons of God, roaming the Earth
Caſt wanton eyes on the daughters of men, 180
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not ſeen. or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'ſt,
In wood or grove by moſſy fountain ſide,
In valley or green meadow, to way-lay 185
Some beauty rare, Caliſta, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amynone, Syrinx, many more.
Too long, then lay'ſt thy ſcapes on names ador'd,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan, 190
Satir, or Faun, or Sylvan? But theſe haunts
Delight not all; among the ſons of men,

How many' have with a smile made small account
Of Beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
All her assaults, on worthier things intent? 195
Remember that Pellean conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the East
He slightly view'd, and slightly overpafs'd;
How he firnam'd of Africa dismiss'd
In his prime youth the fair Iberian maid, 200
For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full
Of honor, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state;
Thence to the bait of women lay expos'd:
But he whom we attempt is wiser far 205
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on th' accomplishment
Of greatest things; what woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye 210
Of fond desire? or should she confident,
As sitting queen ador'd on Beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
To' enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell; 215
How would one look from his majestic brow
Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
Discount'nance her despis'd, and put to rout
All her array; her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe? for Beauty stands 220

In th' admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; cease to' admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden flighting quite abash'd :
'Therefore with manlier objects we must try 225
His constancy, with such as have more show
Of worth, of honor, glory', and popular praise;
Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wreck'd;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of Nature, not beyond; 230
And now I know he hungers where no food
Is to be found, in the wide wilderness;
The rest commit to me, I shall let pass
No' advantage, and his strength as oft assay.

He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud acclame;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band 236
Of spirits likest to himself in guile
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part; 240
Then to the desert takes with these his flight;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
After forty days fasting had remain'd,
Now hungering first, and to himself thus said.

Where will this end? four times ten days I've pass'd
Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food 246
Nor tasted, nor had appetite; that fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part

Of what I suffer here; if Nature need not,
Or God support Nature without repast 250
Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
But now I feel I hunger, which declares
Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain: so it remain 255
Without this body's wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of famin fear no harm,
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
Me hungring more to do my Father's will.

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son 260
Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
And dream'd, as Appetite is wont to dream
Of meats and drinks, Nature's refreshment sweet;
Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood, 266
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing ev'n and morn,
Though ravenous, taught to' abstain from what they
He saw the Prophet also how he fled [brought:
Into the desert, and how there he slept 271
Under a juniper; then how awak'd
He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose, 275
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days;

Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night, and now the herald lark
Left his ground-nest, high tow'ring to descry 280
The Morn's approach, and greet her with his song :
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream,
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.
Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd, 285
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote or herd ;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw,
Only' in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chaunt of tuneful birds resounding loud ; 290
Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
High rooft, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
'That open'd in the midst a woody scene ;
Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art) 295
And to a superstitious eye the haunt
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs ; he view'd it round,
When suddenly a man before him stood,
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city', or court, or palace bred, 300
And with fair speech these words to him address'd.

With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide

Of all things destitute, and well I know, 305
 Not without hunger. Others of some note,
 As story tells, have trod this wilderness;
 The fugitive bond-woman with her son
 Out-cast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
 By a providing angel; all the race 310
 Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God
 Rain'd from Heav'n manna; and that prophet bold
 Native of Thebez wand'ring here was fed
 Twice by a voice inviting him to eat:
 Of thee these forty days none hath regard, 315
 Forty and more deserted here indeed.

To whom thus Jesus. What conclud'st thou hence?
 They all had need, as I thou see'st have none.

How hast thou hunger then? Satan reply'd.
 Tell me if food were now before thee set, 320
 Would'st thou not eat? Thereafter as I like
 The giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that
 Cause thy refusal? said the subtle Fiend.
 Hast thou not right to all created things?
 Owe not all creatures by just right to thee 325
 Duty and service, not to stay till bid,
 But tender all their power? nor mention I
 Meats by the law unclean, or offer'd first
 To idols, those young Daniel could refuse;
 Nor proffer'd by an enemy, though who 330
 Would scruple that, with want oppress'd? Behold
 Nature asham'd, or better to express,

Troubled that thou should'st hunger, hath purvey'd
From all the elements her choicest store
To treat thee as befits, and as her Lord
With honor, only deign to sit and eat.

335

He spake no dream, for as his words had end,
Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld
In ample space under the broadest shade
A table richly spread, in regal mode,
With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
And favor, beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
Gris-amber steam'd; all fish from sea or shore,
Freshet, or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisite name, for which was drain'd
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
Alas how simple, to these cates compar'd,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!
And at a stately side-board by the wine
That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas; distant more
Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flow'rs from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabled since
Of faery damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,

340

345

350

355

360

Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore :
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes, and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odors fann'd
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells. 365
Such was the splendor, and the Tempter now
His invitation earnestly renew'd.

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat ?
These are not fruits forbidden ; no interdict
Defends the touching of these viands pure ; 370
Their taste no knowledge works at least of evil,
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are spi'rits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay 375
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord :
What doubt'st thou Son of God ? sit down and eat.

To whom thus Jesus temp'rately reply'd.
Said'st thou not that to all things I had right ?
And who withholds my power that right to use ? 380
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command ?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of angels ministrant 385
Array'd in glory on my cup to' attend :
Why should'st thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find ?

And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn, 390
And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles.
To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent.
That I have also power to give thou seest;
If of that power I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleas'd, 395
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why should'st thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect;
Of these things others quickly will dispose, 400
Whose pains have earn'd the far set spoil. With that
Both table and provision vanish'd quite
With sound of Harpies' wings, and talons heard;
Only th' impórtune Tempter still remain'd,
And with these words his temptation pursu'd. 405
By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd;
Thy temperance invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite,
And all thy heart is set on high designs, 410
High actions; but wherewith to be achiev'd?
Great acts require great means of enterprise;
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home, 415
Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit :

Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire
To greatness? whence authority deriv'd?
What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude, 420
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
Money brings honor, friends, conquest, and realms:
What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,
And his son Herod plac'd on Judah's throne, 424
(Thy throne) but gold that got him puissant friends?
Therefore, if at great things thou would'st arrive,
Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me;
Riches are mine, Fortune is in my hand;
They whom I favor thrive in wealth amain, 430
While Virtue, Valor, Wisdom sit in want.

To whom thus Jesus patiently reply'd.
Yet wealth without these three is impotent
To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.
Witness those ancient empires of the Earth, 435
In highth of all their flowing wealth dissolv'd:
But men endued with these have oft attain'd
In lowest poverty to highest deeds;
Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat 440
So many ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
Among the Heathen, (for throughout the world
To me is not unknown what hath been done

Worthy' of memorial) canst thou not remember 445

Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?

For I esteem those names of men so poor

Who could do mighty things, and could contemn

Riches though offer'd from the hand of kings.

And what in me seems wanting, but that I 450

May also in this poverty as soon

Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?

Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,

The wise man's cumbrance if not snare, more apt

To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge, 455

Than prompt her to do ought may merit praise.

What if with like aversion I reject

Riches and realms; yet not for that a crown,

Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,

Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights

To him who wears the regal diadem, 461

When on his shoulders each man's burthen lies;

For therein stands the office of a king,

His honor, virtue, merit and chief praise,

That for the public all this weight he bears. 465

Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules

Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king;

Which every wise and virtuous man attains:

And who attains not, ill aspires to rule

Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes, 470

Subject himself to anarchy within,

Or lawless passions in him which he serves.

But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrin, and from error lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright, 475
Is yet more kingly; this attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight. 480
Besides to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous than to assume.
Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a scepter, oftest better mis'd. 486

The End of the Second Book.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK III.

So spake the Son of God, and Satan stood
 A while as mute, confounded what to say,
 What to reply, confuted and convinc'd
 Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift;
 At length collecting all his serpent wiles, 5
 With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts.

I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
 What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
 Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
 To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart 10
 Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
 Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
 Thy counsel would be as the oracle
 Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
 On Aaron's breast; or tongue of seers old 15
 Infallible: or wert thou sought to deeds
 That might require th' array of war, thy skill
 Of conduct would be such, that all the world
 Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
 In battel, though against thy few in arms. 20
 These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide,
 Affecting private life, or more obscure
 In savage wilderness? wherefore deprive
 All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself

The fame and glory, glory the reward 25
That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
Of most erected spi'rits, most temper'd pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers all but the highest? 30
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe; the son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quell'd 35
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd 40
With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
Inglorious: but thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus reply'd.
Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect 45
For glory's sake by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people but a herd confus'd, 49
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol [praise?
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth the
They praise, and they admire they know not what,

And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues and be their talk, 55
Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise?
His lot who dares be singularly good.
Th' intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.
This is true glory and renown, when God 60
Looking on th' Earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heav'n
To all his angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises: thus he did to Job,
When to extend his fame through Heav'n and Earth,
As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember, 66
He ask'd thee, Hast thou seen my servant Job?
Famous he was in Heav'n, on Earth less known;
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy' of fame.
They err who count it glorious to subdue 71
By conquest far and wide, to over-run
Large countries, and in field great battels win,
Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and inflave 75
Peaceable nations, neighb'ring, or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of Peace destroy, 80

Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worshipt with temple, priest and sacrifice?
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
Till conqu'ror Death discover them scarce men, 35
Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But if there be in glory ought of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd
Without ambition, war, or violence; 90
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance: I mention still
Him whom thy wrongs with faintly patience borne
Made famous in a land and times obscure;
Who names not now with honor patient Job? 95
Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?)
By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
Yet if for fame and glory ought be done, 100
Ought suffer'd; if young African for fame
His wasted country freed from Punic rage,
The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek, 105
Oft not deserv'd? I seek not mine, but his
Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.
To whom the Tempter murmur'd thus reply'd.

Think not so slight of glory; therein least
Resembling thy great Father: he seeks glory, 110
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs; nor content in Heav'n
By all his angels glorify'd, requires
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption; 115
Above all sacrifice, or hallow'd gift
Glory' he requires, and glory he receives
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
Or barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd;
From us his foes pronounc'd glory' he exacts. 120

To whom our Saviour fervently reply'd.
And reason; since his Word all things produc'd,
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to show forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul 125
Freely; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory' and benediction, that is thanks,
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return him nothing else,
And not returning that would likeliest render 130
Contempt instead, dishonor, obloquy?
Hard recompense, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence.
But why should man seek glory, who' of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs 135
But condemnation, ignominy', and shame?

Who for so many benefits receiv'd
Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoil'd,
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take 140
That which to God alone of right belongs;
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance.

So spake the Son of God; and here again 145
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin, for he himself
Insatiable of glory had lost all,
Yet of another plea bethought him soon.

Of glory, as thou wilt, said he, so deem, 150
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass:
But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To sit upon thy father David's throne;
By mother's side thy father; though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part 155
Easily from possession won with arms:
Judæa now and all the Promis'd Land,
Reduc'd a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius; nor is always rul'd
With temp'rate sway; oft have they violated 160
The temple, oft the law with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus: and think'st thou to regain
Thy right by sitting still or thus retiring?

So did not Maccabeus: he indeed
Retir'd unto the desert, but with arms;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd,
That by strong hand his family obtain'd
Tho' priests, the crown, and David's throne usurp'd,
With Modin and her suburbs once content. 165
If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty; zeal and duty are not slow;
But on Occasion's forelock watchful wait.
They themselves rather are occasion best,
Zeal of thy father's house, duty to free 175
Thy country from her Heathen servitude;
So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign;
The happier reign the sooner it begins; 179
Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?

To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said:
If of my reign prophetic Writ hath told
That it shall never end, so when begin 185
The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults, 190
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,

Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first 195
Well hath obey'd; just trial ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.

But what concerns it thee when I begin
My everlasting kingdom, why art thou
Solicitous, what moves thy inquisition? 200
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?

To whom the Tempter inly rack'd reply'd.
Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace; what worse? 205

For where no hope is left, is left no fear:
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst; worst is my port,
My harbour and my ultimate repose, 210
The end I would attain, my final good.

My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever for itself condemn'd,
And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
Reign or reign not; though to that gentle brow 215
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell) 220

A shelter and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
Happiest both to thyself and all the world, 225
That thou who worthiest art should'st be their king?
Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detain'd
Of th' enterprize so hazardous and high;
No wonder, for though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found, 230
Or human Nature can receive, consider
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, few days 234
Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienc'd, will be ever 240
Timorous and loath, with novice modesty,
(As he who seeking asses found a kingdom)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventrous:
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes 245
The monarchies of th' Earth, their pomp and state,
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,

And regal mysteries, that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand. 250

With that (such power was giv'n him then) he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.

It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain out-stretch'd in circuit wide
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd, 255
Th' one winding, th' other strait, and left between
Fair champain with less rivers intervein'd,

'Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea:
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil and wine; 259

With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills;
Huge cities and high tower'd, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs, and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert fountainless and dry. 264

'To this high mountain top the Tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league; here thou behold'st
Assyria and her empire's ancient bounds, 270

Araxes and the Caspian lake, thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay,
And inaccessible th' Arabian drouth:
Here Nineveh, of length within her wall 275
Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,

Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues, 280
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis
His city there thou seest, and Baetra there; 285
Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but kings; of later fame
Built by Emathian, or by Parthian hands, 290
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
Artaxata, Terebon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye thou may'st behold.
All these the Parthian, now some ages past,
By great Arsaces led, who founded first 295
That empire, under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great power; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host 300
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste; see, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage

They issue forth, steel bows, and shafts their arms
Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit; 306
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.

He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
'The city gates out-pour'd, light armed troops 311
In coats of mail and military pride;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prauncing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound; 315
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,
From Atropatia and the neighb'ring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south 320
Of Susiana, to Balfara's haven.

He saw them in their forms of battel rang'd,
How quick they wheel'd, and fly'ing behind them shot
Sharp fleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight; 325
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown:
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots or elephants indors'd with towers
Of archers, nor of lab'ring pioneers 330
A multitude with spades and axes arm'd
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,

Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries, 335
And wagons fraught with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,
The city' of Gallaphrone, from whence to win 340
The fairest of her sex Angelica
His daughter, fought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemain.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry;
At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presum'd, 345
And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety; hear, and mark
To what end I have brought thee hither and shown
All this fair fight: thy kingdom though foretold 351
By prophet or by angel, unless thou
Endeavor, as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means, 355
Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
But say thou wert possess'd of David's throne
By free consent of all, none opposit,
Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure, 360

Between two such inclosing enemies
Roman and Parthian? therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own, the Parthian first
By my advice, as nearer, and of late
Found able by invasion to annoy 365
'Thy country', and captive lead away her kings
Antigonus, and old Hyrcanus bound,
Maugre the Roman: it shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose; 371
Chuse which thou wilt by conquest or by league.
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly reinstall thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor,
Deliverance of thy brethren, those Ten Tribes
Whose offspring in his territory' yet serve, 375
In Habor, and among the Medes dispers'd;
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph lost
Thus long from Israel, serving as of old
'Their fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,
'This offer sets before thee to deliver. 380
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
'Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear. 385
To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.
Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
And fragil arms, much instrument of war

Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou' hast set; and in my ear 390
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battels and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth nought.
Means I must use, thou say'st, prediction else
Will unpredict and fail me of the throne: 395
My time I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come:
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part ought endeavoring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome 400
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those Ten Tribes
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full scepter sway 405
To just extent over all Israel's sons;
But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
Of numb'ring Israël, which cost the lives 410
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days' pestilence? such was thy zeal
To Israel then, the same that now to me.
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off 415
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,

And all th' idolatries of Heathen round,
Besides their other worfe than heath'nish crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity 420
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers; but so dy'd
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain, 425
And God with idols in their worship join'd.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who freed as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would follow'; and to their gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan? no, let them serve 431
Their enemies, who serve idols with God.
Yet he at length, time to himself best known,
Remembring Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back repentant and sincere, 435
And at their passing cleave th' Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to the Promis'd Land their fathers pass'd;
To his due time and providence I leave them. 440
So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with Truth Falshood contends. 443

The End of the Third Book.

PARADISE REGAIN'D

BOOK IV.

PERPLEX'D and troubled at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
That sleek'd his tongue, and won so much on Eve, 5
So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve,
This far his over-match, who self-deceiv'd
And rash, before-hand had no better weigh'd
The strength he was to cope with, or his own :
But as a man who had been matchless held 10
In cunning, over-reach'd where least he thought,
To save his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more ;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time, 15
About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound ;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
'Though all to shivers dash'd, th' assault renew,
Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end ; 20
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er though desp'rate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.

He brought our Saviour to the western side 25
 Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
 Another plain, long but in breadth not wide,
 Wash'd by the southern sea, and on the north
 To equal length back with a ridge of hills,
 'That screen'd the fruits of th' Earth and seats of men
 From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the midst 31
 Divided by a river, of whose banks
 On each side an imperial city stood,
 With tow'rs and temples proudly elevate
 On sev'n small hills, with palaces adorn'd, 35
 Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
 Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
 Gardens and groves presented to his eyes,
 Above the highth of mountains interpos'd :
 By what strange parallax or optic skill 40
 Of vision multiply'd through air, or glass
 Of telescope, were curious to inquire :
 And now the Tempter thus his silence broke.

The city which thou seest no other deem
 Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth
 So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd 46
 Of nations; there the Capitol thou seest
 Above the rest lifting his stately head
 On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
 Impregnable, and there Mount Palatine, 50
 Th' imperial palace, compass huge, and high
 The structure, skill of noblest architects,

With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets and terraces, and glitt'ring spires.
Many a fair edifice besides, more like 55
Houses of God, (so well I have dispos'd
My acry microscope) thou may'st behold
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs,
Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd artificers
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold. 60
Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in,
Pretors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power, 65
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings:
Or embassies from regions far remote
In various habits on the Appian road,
Or on th' Emilian, some from farthest south,
Syene', and where the shadow both way falls, 70
Meroe Nilotic ile, and more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea;
From th' Asian kings and Parthian among these,
From India and the golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian ile Taprobane, 75
Dusk faces with white filken turbants wreath'd;
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west,
Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
All nations now to Rome obedience pay, 80

'To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain
In ample territory, wealth and power,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,
And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
Before the Parthian; these two thrones except, 85
The rest are barb'rous, and scarce worth the fight,
Shar'd among petty kings too far remov'd;
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This emp'ror hath no son, and now is old, 90
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
To Caprea, an island small but strong
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
Committing to a wicked favorite 95
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,
Hated of all, and hating; with what ease,
Indued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne
Now made a flye, and in his place ascending 101
A victor people free from servile yoke?
And with my help thou may'st; to me the power
Is giv'n, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim therefore at no less than all the world, 105
Aim at the high'est, without the high'est attain'd
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophecy'd what will.

To whom the Son of God unmov'd reply'd.
Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show 110
Of luxury, though call'd Magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind; though thou should'st add to tell
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or Atlantic stone, 115
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read)
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios, and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal, and myrrhine cups imbos'd with gems
And studs of pearl, to me should'st tell who thirst
And hunger still: then embassies thou show'st 121
From nations far and nigh; what honor that,
But tedious waste of time to sit and hear
So many hollow complements and lies,
Outlandish flatteries? then proceed'st to talk 125
Of th' emperor, how easily subdued,
How gloriously; I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutish monster: what if I withal
Expel a devil who first made him such?
Let his tormenter Conscience find him out; 130
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal, who once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temp'rate, conquer'd well,
But govern ill the nations under yoke, 135
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all

By lust and rapin; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inur'd
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd, 140
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
'These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free? 145
Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the Earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world, 150
And of my kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this, but what the means
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

To whom the Tempter impudent reply'd.
I see all offers made by me how slight 155
Thou valuest, because offer'd, and reject'st:
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict:
On the other side know also thou, that I
On what I offer set as high esteem, 160
Nor what I part with mean to give for nought;
All these which in a moment thou behold'st,
'The kingdoms of the world to thee I give;
For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,

No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else, 165
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superior lord,
Easily done, and hold them all of me;
For what can less so great a gift deserve?

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain.
I never lik'd thy talk; thy offers less, 171
Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
Th' abominable terms, impious condition;
But I endure the time, till which expir'd,
Thou hast permission on me. It is written 175
The first of all commandments, Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accurs'd, now more accurs'd
For this attempt bolder than that on Eve, 180
And more blasphemous? which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given,
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd;
Other donation none thou canst produce:
If giv'n, by whom but by the King of kings, 185
God over all supreme? if giv'n to thee,
By thee how fairly is the giver now
Repaid? But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
As offer them to me the Son of God, 190
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God?

Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'st
That evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.

To whom the Fiend with fear abash'd reply'd. 195
Be not so sore offended, Son of God,

Though sons of God both angels are and men,
If I to try whether in higher sort

Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd
What both from men and angels I receive, 200

Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the Earth
Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,

God of this world invok'd and world beneath;
Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold

To me so fatal, me it most concerns. 205

The trial hath indamag'd thee no way,

Rather more honor left and more esteem;

Me nought advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.

Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,

The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more 210

Advise thee; gain them as thou canst, or not.

And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd

Than to a worldly crown, addicted more

To contemplation and profound dispute,

As by that early action may be judg'd, 215

When slipping from thy mother's eye thou went'st

Alone into the temple; there wast found

Among the gravest Rabbies disputant

On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,

Teaching not taught; the childhood shows the man,

As morning shows the day. Be famous then 221
By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend:
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moses' law, 225
The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote;
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature's light;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion as thou mean'st; 230
Without their learning how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee hold conversation meet?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?
Error by his own arms is best evinc'd. 235
Look once more ere we leave this specular mount
Westward, much nearer by southwest, behold
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
Athens the eye of Greece, mother of Arts 240
And Eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess.
City' or suburban, studious walks and shades;
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird 245
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
There flowery hill Hymettus with the sound
Of bees industrious murmur oft invites

To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
His whisp'ring stream : within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages; his who bred 251
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next :
There shalt thou hear and learn the secret power
Of Harmony in tones and numbers hit 255
By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phœbus challeng'd for his own. 260
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of Fate, and Chance, and change in human life; 265
High actions, and high passions best describing :
Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratic,
Shook th' arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece, 270
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne :
To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
From Heav'n descended to the low-rooft house
Of Socrates; see there his tenement,
Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd 275
Wiseft of men ; from whose mouth issued forth

Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Sirnam'd Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicurean, and the Stoic severe; 280
These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight;
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire join'd.

To whom our Saviour sagely thus reply'd. 285
Think not but that I know these things, or think
I know them not; not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I ought: he who receives
Light from above, from the Fountain of Light,
No other doctrin needs, though granted true; 290
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all profess'd
To know this only, that he nothing knew;
The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits; 295
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense;
Others in virtue plac'd felicity,
But virtue join'd with riches and long life;
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease;
The Stoic last in philosophic pride, 300
By him call'd Virtue; and his virtuous man,
Wife, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
Equals to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, condemning all

Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which when he lists he leaves, or boasts he can, 306
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas, what can they teach, and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more, 310
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none, 315
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True Wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets, 320
An empty cloud. However, many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains, 326
Deep vers'd in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore. 330
Or if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon

As in our native language can I find
That solace? All our law and story strow'd
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,
Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon, 336
That pleas'd so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own 340
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets thick laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
Thin sown with ought of profit or delight, 345
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is prais'd aright, and godlike men,
The holiest of holies, and his saints;
Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee, 350
Unless where moral virtue is express'd
By light of Nature not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of eloquence, statists indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem; 355
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government
In their majestic unaffected stile
Than all th' oratory of Greece and Rome. 363

In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
 What makes a nation happy', and keeps it so,
 What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;
 These only with our law best form a king.

So spake the Son of God; but Satan now 365
 Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
 Thus to our Saviour with stern brow reply'd.

Since neither wealth, nor honor, arms nor arts,
 Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor ought
 By me propos'd in life contemplative, 370
 Or active, tended on by glory', or fame,
 What dost thou in this world? the wilderness
 For thee is fittest place; I found thee there,
 And thither will return thee; yet remember
 What I foretel thee, soon thou shalt have cause 375
 To wish thou never hadst rejected thus

Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,
 Which would have set thee in short time with ease
 On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
 Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season, 380
 When prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.

Now contrary, if I read ought in Heav'n,
 Or Heav'n ought of Fate, by what the stars
 Voluminous, or single characters,
 In their conjunction met, give me to spell, 385
 Sorrows, and labors, opposition, hate
 Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
 Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death;

A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
Real or allegoric I discern not, 390
Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefix'd
Directs me in the starry rubric set.

So say'ing he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expir'd) and to the wilderness 395
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darknes now rose,
As day-light sunk, and brought in loursing Night
Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light and absent day. 400

Our Saviour meek and with untroubled mind
After his aery jaunt, though hurried fore,
Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades, 404
Whose branching armsthick interwin'd might shield
From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head,
But shelter'd slept in vain, for at his head
The Tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturb'd his sleep; and either tropic now 409
'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n, the clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce ran with lightning mix'd, water with fire
In ruin reconcil'd: nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell 415

On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks
Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer : ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st 420
Unshaken ; nor yet stay'd the terror there,
Infernal ghosts, and hellish furies, round [shrick'd,
Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace. 425
Thus pass'd the night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray,
Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had rais'd 430
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheer'd the face of Earth, and dry'd the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree ; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous, 436
Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
To gratulate the sweet return of Morn ;
Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn
Was absent, after all his mischief done, 440
The Prince of Darkness, glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,

Yet with no new device, they all were spent,
Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
Desp'rate of better course, to vent his rage, 445
And mad despite to be so oft repell'd.

Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said. 450

Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night; I heard the wrack
As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear
As dang'rous to the pillar'd frame of Heav'n, [them
Or to the Earth's dark basis underneath, 456
Are to the main as inconsiderable

And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone;
Yet as being oft times noxious where they light 460
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in th' affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:
This tempest at this desert most was bent;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st. 465

Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offer'd with my aid
To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt pro

All to the push of Fate, pursue thy way 470
Of gaining David's throne no man knows when,
For both the when and how is no where told,
'Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
For angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
The time and means: each act is rightliest done, 475
Not when it must, but when it may be best.
If thou observe not this, be sure to find
What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's scepter get fast hold; 480
Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,
So many terrors, voices, prodigies,
May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.

So talk'd he while the Son of God went on
And stay'd not, but in brief him answer'd thus. 485

Me worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm
Those terrors which thou speak'st of did me none;
I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
And threatening nigh; what they can do as signs
Betokening, or ill boding, I condemn 490
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offer'd aid, that I accepting
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious spirit, and wouldst be thought my god,
And storm'st thyself, thinking to terrify 496

Me to thy will; desist, thou art discern'd
And toil't in vain, nor me in vain molest.

To whom the Fiend now sworn with rage reply'd.
Then hear, O Son of David, Virgin-born; 500
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt:

Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the Prophets; of thy birth at length
Announc'd by Gabriel with the first I knew,
And of th' angelic song in Bethlehem field, 505
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.

From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
Till at the ford of Jordan whither all 510

Flock to the Baptist, I among the rest,
Though not to be baptiz'd, by voice from Heav'n
Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God below'd.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn 515

In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
The Son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was, I am; relation stands;
All men are sons of God; yet thee I thought 520

In some respect far higher so declar'd.
Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;

Where by all best conjectures I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy. 525
Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent;
By parl, or composition, truce, or league
To win him, or win from him what I can. 530
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confels have found thee
Proof against all temptation, as a rock
Of adamant, and as a center, firm,
To th' utmost of mere man both wise and good, 535
Not more; for honors, riches, kingdoms, glory
Have been before condemn'd, and may again:
Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heav'n,
Another method I must now begin. 540

So say'ing he caught him up, and without wing
Of hippogrif bore through the air sublime
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain;
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The holy city lifted high her towers, 545
And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires:
There on the highest pinnacle he set
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn. 550

There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill; I to thy Father's house
Have brought thee', and highest plac'd, highest is best,
Now show thy progeny; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down; safely, if Son of God: 555
For it is written, He will give command
Concerning thee to his angels, in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.

To whom thus Jesus; Also it is written, 560
Tempt not the Lord thy God: he said and stood:
But Satan smitten with amazement fell.
As when Earth's son Antæus (to compare
Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd still rose, 565
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd,
Throttled at length in th' air, expir'd and fell;
So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride 570
Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall.

And as that Theban monster that propos'd
Her riddle', and him who solv'd it not devour'd,
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from th' Ismenian steep; 575
So struck with dread and anguish fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought

Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God. 580
So Satan fell; and strait a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plummy vans receiv'd him soft
From his uneasy station, and up bore
As on a floating couch through the blithe air, 585
Then in a flow'ry valley set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine,
Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of Life,
And from the fount of Life ambrosial drink, 590
That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if ought hunger had impair'd,
Or thirst; and as he fed, angelic quires
Sung heav'nly anthems of his victory
Over temptation, and the Tempter proud. 595
True image of the Father, whether thron'd
In the bosom of Bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or remote from Heav'n, inshrin'd
In fleshly tabernacle, and human form,
Wand'ring the wilderness, whatever place, 600
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with Godlike force indued
Against th' attempter of thy Father's throne,
And thief of Paradise; him long of old

Thou didst rebel, and down from Heaven cast 605
With all his army, now thou hast aveng'd
Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent :
He never more henceforth will dare set foot 610
In Paradise to tempt ; his snares are broke :
For though that seat of earthly blifs be fail'd,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou
A Saviour art come down to re-instal 615
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
Of Tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, infernal Serpent, shalt not long
Rule in the clouds ; like an autumnal star
Or lightning thou shalt fall from Heav'n, trod down
Under his feet : for proof, ere this thou feel'st 621
Thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest wound,
By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in Hell
No triumph ; in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt ; hereafter learn with awe 625
To dread the Son of God : he all unarm'd
Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul,
Thee and thy legions ; yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine, 630
Lest he command them down into the Deep

Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
Hail Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind. 635

Thus they the Son of God our Saviour meek
Sung Victor, and from heav'nly feast refresh'd
Brought on his way with joy; he unobserv'd
Home to his mother's house private return'd. 639

The End of Paradise Regain'd.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

Τραγῳδία μιμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, &c.

Aristot. Poet. cap. 6.

Tragedia est imitatio actionis serie, &c. per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.

OF THAT SORT OF
DRAMATIC POEM
WHICH IS CALLED TRAGEDY.

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently compos'd, hath been ever held the graveſt, moraleſt, and moſt profitable of all other poems: therefore ſaid by Aristotle to be of power by raiſing pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of thoſe and ſuch like paſſions, that is, to temper and reduce them to juſt meaſure with a kind of delight, ſtirr'd up by reading or ſeeing thoſe paſſions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his aſſertion: for ſo in phyſic things of melancholic hue and quality are us'd againſt melancholy, ſour againſt ſour, ſalt to remove ſalt humors. Hence philoſophers and other graveſt writers, as Cicero, Plutarch and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illuſtrate their

discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33.; and Paræus commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts distinguished each by a chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have labor'd not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honor Dionysius the Elder was no less ambitious than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cesar also had begun his *Ajax*, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbecoming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which is intitled *Christ Suffering*. This is mention'd to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; bap'ning through the poets' error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defense, or explanation, that which Martial calls an epistle; in behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus

much before-hand may be epistled; that chorus is here introduc'd after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modeling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the Ancients and Italians are rather follow'd, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse us'd in the chorus is of all sorts, call'd by the Greeks *Monstrophic*, or rather *Apoclymenon*, without regard had to *Strophe*, *Antistrophe*, or *Epod*, which were a kind of stanzas fram'd only for the music, then us'd with the chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be call'd *Alloestrophe*. Division into act and scene referring chiefly to the stage (to which this Work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produc'd beyond the fifth act. Of the stile and uniformity, and that commonly call'd the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such aconomy, or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum; they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, the three tragic poets unequal'd yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavor to write tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of twenty-four hours.

The Persons.

SAMSON.

MANOAH, the Father of Samson.

DALILA, his Wife.

HARAPHA of Gath.

Public Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

The SCENE before the prison in Gaza.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

The Argument.

Samson made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labor as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labor, comes forth into the open air, to a place high, somewhat retir'd, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his Tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father Manoah, who endeavors the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaim'd by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoah then departs to prosecute his endeavor with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons; and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatnings to fetch him: the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoah returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance: in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterward more distinctly relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

SAMSON.

A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade:
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily' in the common prison else injoin'd me,
Where I a prisoner chain'd, scarce freely draw

5

H ij

The air imprison'd also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught : but here I feel amends,
The breath of Heav'n fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born ; here leave me to respire. 11
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works ; unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me ; hence with leave 15
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone, 20
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
O wherefore was my birth from Heav'n foretold
Twice by an angel, who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended 25
From off the altar, where an offering burn'd,
As in a fiery column charioting
His godlike presence, and from some great act
Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race ?
Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd 30
As of a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits ; if I must die
Betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze ;
To grind in brazen fetters under task 35

With this Heav'n-gifted strength! O glorious strength
 Put to the labor of a beast, debas'd
 Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
 Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
 Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him 40
 Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
 Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke:
 Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
 Divine prediction; what if all foretold
 Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default, 45
 Whom have I to complain of but myself?
 Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
 In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
 Under the seal of Silence could not keep,
 But weakly to a woman must reveal it, 50
 O'ercome with importunity and tears.
 O impotence of mind, in body strong!
 But what is strength without a double share
 Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
 Proudly secure, yet liable to fall 55
 By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,
 But to subserve where Wisdom bears command!
 God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
 How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
 But peace, I must not quarrel with the will 60
 Of highest dispensation, which herein
 Haply had ends above my reach to know:
 Suffices that to me strength is my bane,

And proves the source of all my miseries;
So many, and so huge, that each apart 65
Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,
O loss of Sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light the prime work of God to me' is extinct, 70
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me,
They creep, yet see, I dark in light expos'd 75
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon, 80
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be Light, and light was over all;
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree? 85
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon,
When she deserts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life, 90
And almost life itself, if it be true

That light is in the soul,
 She all in every part; why was the sight
 To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd,
 So obvious and so easy to be quench'd? 95
 And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,
 That she might look at will through every pore?
 Then had I not been thus exil'd from light,
 As in the land of Darknefs yet in light,
 To live a life half dead, a living death, 100
 And bury'd; but O yet more miserable!
 Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave,
 Bury'd, yet not exempt
 By privilege of death and burial
 From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs, 105
 But made hereby obnoxious more
 To all the miseries of life,
 Life in captivity
 Among inhuman foes.
 But who are these? for with joint pace I hear 110
 The tread of many feet steering this way;
 Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
 At my affliction, and perhaps to' insult,
 Their daily practice to afflict me more.
 CHOR. This, this is he; softly a while, 115
 Let us not break in upon him;
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
 With languish'd head unpropt,

As one past hope, abandon'd, 120
 And by himself giv'n over;
 In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
 O'er-worn and soil'd;
 Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
 That heroic, that renown'd, 125
 Irresistible Samson? whom unarm'd
 No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could with-
 Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid, [stand;
 Ran on imbattel'd armies clad in iron,
 And weaponless himself, 130
 Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
 Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass,
 Chalybean temper'd steel, and frock of mail
 Adamantean proof;
 But safest he who stood aloof, 135
 When insupportably his foot advanc'd,
 In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
 Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
 Flew from his lion ramp, old warriors turn'd
 Their plated backs under his heel; 140
 Or grov'ling soil'd their crested helmets in the dust.
 Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
 The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
 A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of Palestine,
 In Ramath-lechi famous to this day. 145
 Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders
 The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar, [bore

Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,
 No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded so;
 Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heav'n.
 Which shall I first bewail, 151
 Thy bondage or lost sight,
 Prison within prison
 Inseparably dark?
 Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!) 155
 The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
 (Which men enjoying sight oft without cause com-
 Imprison'd now indeed, [plain]
 In real darkness of the body dwells,
 Shut up from outward light 160
 To' incorporate with gloomy Night;
 For inward light, alas!
 Puts forth no visual beam.
 O mirror of our fickle state,
 Since man on earth unparallel'd! 165
 The rarer thy example stands,
 By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
 Strongest of mortal men,
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n.
 For him I reckon not in high estate 170
 Whom long descent of birth
 Or the sphere of fortune raises;
 But thee whose strength, while Virtue was her mate,
 Might have subdued the earth,
 Universally crown'd with highest praises. 175

SAM. I hear the sound of words, their sense the air
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

CHOR. He speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless in
The glory late of Israel, now the grief; [might,
We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale, 181
To visit or bewail thee, or if better,
Counsel or consolation we may bring,
Salve to thy sores; apt words have power to swage
The tumors of a troubled mind, 185
And are as balm to fester'd wounds.

SAM. Your coming, Friends, revives me, for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
Bear in their superscription, (of the most 190
I would be understood) in prosp'rous days
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O Friends,
How many evils have inclos'd me round; 194
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
Blindness, for had I sight, confus'd with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who like a foolish pilot have shipwrack'd
My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a tear, 200
Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? tell me, Friends,
Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool

In every street? do they not say, How well
 Are come upon him his deserts? yet why? 205
 Immeasurable strength they might behold
 In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;
 This with the other should, at least, have pair'd,
 These two proportion'd ill drove me transverse.

CHOR. Tax not divine disposal; wisest men 210
 Have err'd, and by bad women been deceiv'd;
 And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
 Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
 Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;
 Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder 215
 Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
 Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
 At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

SAM. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd
 Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed 220
 The daughter of an infidel: they knew not
 That what I motion'd was of God; I knew
 From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd
 The marriage on; that by occasion hence
 I might begin Israel's deliverance, 225
 The work to which I was divinely call'd.
 She proving false, the next I took to wife
 (O that I never had! fond wish too late)
 Was in the vale of Sorec, Dal'la,
 That specious monster, my accomplish'd snare. 230
 I thought it lawful from my former act,

And the same end; still watching to oppress
 Israel's oppressors: of what now I suffer
 She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
 Who vanquish'd with a peal of words (O weakness!)
 Gave up my fort of silence to a woman. 236

CHOR. In seeking just occasion to provoke
 The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
 'Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
 Yet Israel still serves with all his sons. 240

SAM. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
 On Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,
 Who seeing those great acts, which God had done
 Singly by me against their conquerors,
 Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd 245
 Deliverance offer'd: I on th' other side
 Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds,
 The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the
 But they persisted deaf, and would not seem [doer;
 To count them things worth notice, till at length
 Their lords the Philistines with gather'd powers 251
 Enter'd Judea seeking me, who then
 Safe to the rock of Etham was retir'd,
 Not flying, but fore-casting in what place
 To set upon them, what advantag'd best: 255
 Mean while the men of Judah, to prevent
 The harrafs of their land, beset me round;
 I willingly on some conditions came
 Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me

To the uncircumcis'd a welcome prey, 260
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threds
Touch'd with the flame: on their whole host I flew
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
Their choicest youth; they only liv'd who fled.
Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe, 265
They had by this possess'd the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom they now serve:
But what more oft in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty, 270
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favor rais'd
As their deliverer; if he ought begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last 275
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

CHOR. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel
Their great deliverer contemn'd,
The matchless Gideon in pursuit 280
Of Madian and her vanquish'd kings:
And how ingrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite, 285
Had not his prowess quell'd their pride
In that fore battel, when so many dy'd

Without reprieve adjudg'd to death,
For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.

SAM. Of such examples add me to the roll, 298
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's propos'd deliverance not so.

CHOR. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men;
Unless there be who think not God at all : 295
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrin never was there school,
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts found contradicting, 301
Then give the reins to wand'ring thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution;
Till by their own perplexities involv'd
They ravel more, still less resolv'd, 305
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th' Interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to' exempt 310
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else who never wanted means, 315

Nor in respect of th' enemy just cause
 To set his people free,
 Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
 Against his vow of strictest purity,
 To seek in marriage that fallacious bride, 320
 Unclean, unchaste.

Down Reason then, at least vain reasonings down,
 Though Reason here aver
 That moral verdict quits her of unclean :
 Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his. 325

But see here comes thy reverend sire
 With careful step, locks white as down,
 Old Manoah : advise
 Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

SAM. Ay me, another inward grief awak'd 330
 With mention of that name renews th' assault.

MAN. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
 Though in this uncouth place ; if old respect,
 As I suppose, tow'ards your once glory'd friend
 My son now captivate, hither hath inform'd 335
 Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
 Came lagging after ; say if he be here.

CHOR. As signal now in low dejected state,
 As erst in high'est, behold him where he lies.

MAN. O miserable change ! is this the man 340
 That invincible Samson, far renown'd,
 The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
 Equivalent to angels walk'd their streets,

None offering fight; who single combatant
Duel'd their armies rank'd in proud array, 345
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward arm'd
At one spear's length. O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and oh what not in man
Deceivable and vain? Nay what thing good 350
Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gain'd a son,
And such a son as all men hail'd me happy;
Who would be now a father in my stead? 355
O wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest pray'rs, then giv'n with solemn hand
As graces draw a scorpion's tail behind? 360
For this did th' angel twice descend? for this
Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant
Select, and sacred, glorious for a while,
The miracle of men; then in an hour
Insnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound, 365
Thy foes' derision, captive, poor and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
Alas me thinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall 370
Subject him to so foul indignities



Be' it but for honor's sake of former deeds.

SAM. Appoint not heav'nly disposition, Father;
Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
But justly; I myself have brought them on, 375
Sole author I, sole cause: if ought seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who' have profan'd
The mystery of God giv'n me under pledge
Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy. 380
This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,
But warn'd by oft experience: did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her highth
Of nuptial love profess'd, carrying it strait 385
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals? In this other was there found
More faith, who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offer'd only, by the sent conceiv'd 390
Her spurious first-born, treason against me?
Thrice she assay'd with flattering pray'rs and sighs,
And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength 394
Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might
Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport [know;
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence
She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse

Than undissembled hate) with what contempt 400
 She fought to make me traitor to myself;
 Yet the fourth time, when must'ring all her wiles,
 With blandish parlies, feminine assaults,
 Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night
 To storm me over-watch'd, and weary'd out, 405
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,
 I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
 Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd
 Might easily have shook off all her snares:
 But foul effeminacy held me yok'd 410
 Her bond-slave; O indignity, O blot
 To honor and religion! servile mind
 Rewarded well with servile punishment!
 The base degree to which I now am fall'n,
 These rags, this grinding is not yet so base 415
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
 True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
 That saw not how degenerately I serv'd. 419

MAN. I cannot praise thy marriage choices, Son,
 Rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead
 Divine impulsien prompting how thou might'st
 Find some occasion to infect our foes.
 I state not that; this I am sure, our foes
 Found soon occasion thereby to make thee 425
 Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner
 Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms

To violate the sacred trust of Silence
Deposited within thee; which to have kept
'Tis in thy power: true; and thou bear'st 430
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,
This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim 435
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud
To Dagon, as their god who hath deliver'd
Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnify'd, and God, 440
Besides whom is no god, compar'd with idols
Disglorify'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest, 445
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befall'n thee and thy father's house.

SAM. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honor, I this pomp have brought
To Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high 450
Among the Heathen round; to God have brought
Dishonor, obloquy, and op'd the mouths
Of idolists, and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before 455

To waver, or fall off and join with idols;
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife 460
With me hath end; all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presum'd,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure, 465
Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,
But will arise and his great name assert :
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me, 470
And with confusion blank his worshippers.

MAN. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these
I as a prophecy receive; for God, [words
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name 475
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done ?
Thou must not in the mean while here forgot
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight 480
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy rancome : well they may by this

Have satisfy'd their utmost of revenge
By pains and slaveries, worse than death inflicted 485
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

SAM. Spare that proposal, Father, spare the trouble
Of that solicitation; let me here
As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
And expiate, if possible, my crime, 490
Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
How hainous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab, 495
The mark of fool set on his front?
But I God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have publish'd, impiously,
Weakly at least, and shamefully: a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn 500
To their abyss and horrid pains confin'd.

MAN. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,
But act not in thy own affliction, Son:
Repent the sin, but if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids; 505
Or th' execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself; perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;
Who ever more approves and more accepts; 510
(Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission)

Him who imploring mercy sues for life,
Than who self-rigorous chuses death as due;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd
For self-offense, more than for God offended. 515
Reject not then what offer'd means; who knows
But God hath set before us, to return thee
Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert
His further ire, with pray'rs and vows renew'd? 520

SAM. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
To what end should I seek it? when in strength
All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heav'n foretold and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof 526
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blaz'd,
Fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded 530
On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
Then swell'd with pride into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softens'd with pleasure and voluptuous life;
At length to lay my head and hallow'd pledge 535
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shorn me
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,

Shav'n, and disarm'd among mine enemies. 540

CHOR. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
Which many a famous warrior overturns,
Thou couldst repress, nor did the dancing ruby
Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavor, or the smell,
Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men, 545
Allure thee from the cool crystallin stream.

SAM. Wherever fountain or fresh current flow'd
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heav'n's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying 550
Thirst, and refresh'd; nor envy'd them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

CHOR. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidd'n made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare, 556
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

SAM. But what avail'd this temp'rance, not com-
Against another object more inticing? [plete
What boots it at one gate to make defense, 560
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquish'd? by which means,
Now blind, dishearten'd, sham'd, dishonor'd, quell'd,
To what can I be useful, wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heav'n impos'd, 565
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burd'nous drone; to visitants a gaze,

Or pity'd object, these redundant locks
 Robustious to no purpose clustring down,
 Vain monument of strength; till length of years 570
 And sedentary numness craze my limbs
 To a contemptible old age obscure?
 Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
 Till vermin or the draff of servile food
 Consume me, and oft-invoked death 575
 Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

MAN. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that
 Which was expressly giv'n thee to annoy them? [gift
 Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
 Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age outworn. 580
 But God who caus'd a fountain at thy prayer
 From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to' allay
 After the brunt of battel, can as easy
 Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
 Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast; 585
 And I persuade me so; why else this strength
 Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
 His might continues in thee not for nought,
 Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

SAM. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend, 590
 That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
 Nor th' other light of life continue long,
 But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
 So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
 My hopes all flat, Nature within me seems 595

In all her functions weary of herself,
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

MAN. Believe not these suggestions which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humors black, 600
That mingle with thy fancy. I however
Must not omit a father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
By ransom, or how else: mean while be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

SAM. O that Torment should not be confin'd 606
To the body's wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breast and reins;
But must secret passage find 610
To th' inmost Mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense, 615
Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,
Nor less than wounds immedicable 620
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.

Thoughts my tormentors arm'd with deadly stings

Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure : 630
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heav'n's desertion.

I was his nursing once and choice delight,
His destin'd from the womb,
Promis'd by heav'nly message twice descending. 635
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain;
He led me on to mightiest deeds
Above the nerve of mortal arm
Against th' uncircumcis'd, our enemies : 640
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,
Left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss
Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated 645
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
No long petition, speedy death, 650
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

CHOR. Many are the sayings of the wise
 In ancient and in modern books inroll'd,
 Extolling patience as the truest fortitude;
 And to the bearing well of all calamities, 655
 All chances incident to man's frail life,
 Consolatories writ

With study'd argument, and much persuasion sought
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought:
 But with th' afflicted in his pangs their sound 660
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint;
 Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above,
 Secret refreshings, that repair his strength, 665
 And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers, what is man!
 That thou tow'ards him with hand so various,
 Or might I say contrarious,
 Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
 Not ev'nly, as thou rul'st 671
 Th' angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,
 Irrational and brute?

Nor do I name of men the common rout,
 That wand'ring loose about 675
 Grow up and perish, as the summer flie,
 Heads without name no more remember'd,
 But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
 With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd

To some great work, thy glory, 680
 And people's safety, which in part they' effect:
 Yet toward these thus dignify'd, thou oft
 Amidst their highth of noon
 Changeſt thy count'nance, and thy hand with no re-
 Of higheſt favors paſt [gard
 From thee on them, or them to thee of ſervice. 686

Nor only doſt degrade them, or remit
 To life obſcur'd, which were a fair diſmiſſion,
 But throw'ſt them lower than thou didſt exalt them
 Unſeemly falls in human eye, [high,
 Too grievous for the treſpaſs or omiſſion; 691
 Oft leav'ſt them to the hoſtile ſword
 Of Heathen and profane, their carcaſes
 To dogs and ſowls a prey, or elſe captiv'd;
 Or to th' unjuſt tribunals, under change of times, 695
 And condemnation of th' ungrateful multitude.
 If theſe they 'ſcape, perhaps in poverty
 With ſickneſs and diſeaſe thou bow'ſt them down,
 Painful diſeaſes and deform'd,
 In crude old age; 700
 Though not diſordinate, yet cauſeleſs ſuff'ring
 The puniſhment of diſſolute days: in fine,
 Juſt or unjuſt alike ſeem miſerable,
 For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
 The image of thy ſtrength, and mighty miniſter. 706
 What do I beg? how haſt thou dealt already?

Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labors, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this, what thing of sea or land? 710
Female of sex it seems,

That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,

Comes this way sailing

Like a stately ship

Of Tarsus, bound for th' iles 716

Of Javan or Gadire

With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,

Sails fill'd and streamers waving,

Courted by all the winds that hold them play,

An amber sent of odorous perfume, 720

Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;

Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,

And now at nearer view, no other certain

Than Dalila thy wife. 724

SAM. My wife, my traitress, let her not come near me.

CHOR. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee
Aboutt' have spoke, but now, with head declin'd [fix'd,

Like a fair flower furcharg'd with dew, she weeps,

And words address'd seem into tears dissolv'd,

Wetting the borders of her silken veil: 730

But now again she makes address to speak.

DAL. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,

Which to have merited, without excuse,

I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears 735

May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw)
My penance hath not slacken'd, though my pardon
No way assur'd. But conjugal affection
Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt, 743
Hath led me on desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
If ought in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power, 745
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

SAM. Out, out hyæna; these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray, 750
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
And reconciliation move with feign'd remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears, 755
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men full oft beguil'd
With goodness principled not to reject 760
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Intangled with a pois'nous bosom snake,

If not by quick destruction soon cut off
As I by thee, to ages an example. 765

DAL. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavor
To lessen or extenuate my offense,
But that on th' other side if it be weigh'd
By' itself, with aggravations not surcharg'd,
Or else with just allowance counterpois'd, 770

I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier tow'ards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune 775

Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults:
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is for nought,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety? 780
To what I did thou showed'st me first the way.

But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not:
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel. [frailty:
Let Weakness then with Weakness come to parle 785

So near related, or the same of kind,
Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate, 790
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway

In human hearts, nor less in mind tow'ards thee,
Caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou would'st leave me
As her at Timna, fought by all means therefore 795
How to indear, and hold thee to me firmest:
No better way I saw than by' importuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power
The key of strength and safety: thou wilt say,
Why then reveal'd? I was assur'd by those 800
Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
Against thee but safe custody and hold:
'That made for me; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears, 805
Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed;
Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
Mine and Love's prisoner, not the Philistines,
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love. 810
'These reasons in Love's law have past for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
And Love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity' or pardon hath obtain'd.
Be not unlike all others, not austere 815
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

SAM. How cunningly the forcerefs displays

Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine! 820
That malice not repentance brought thee hither,
By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, th' example,
I led the way; bitter reproach, but true;
I to myself was false ere thou to me;
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly, 825
Take to thy wicked deed; which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feign'd: weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it, weakness to resist 830
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
With God or man will gain thee no remission. 835
But love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust: love seeks to have love;
My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd? 840
In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

DAL. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides, 845
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,

The constantest, to' have yielded without blame.
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
 That wrought with me : thou know'st the magistrates
 And princes of my country came in person, 851
 Solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urg'd,
 Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil duty
 And of religion, press'd how just it was,
 How honorable, how glorious to intrap 855
 A common enemy, who had destroy'd
 Such numbers of our nation : and the priest
 Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
 Preaching how meritorious with the gods
 It would be to insnare an irreligious 860
 Dishonorer of Dagon : what had I
 To' oppose against such powerful arguments?
 Only my love of thee held long debate,
 And combated in silence all these reasons
 With hard contest : at length that grounded maxim
 So ripe and celebrated in the mouths 866
 Of wisest men, that to the public good
 Private respects must yield, with grave authority
 Took full possession of me and prevail'd ;
 Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty so injoining. 870
 SAM. I thought where all thy circling wiles would
 In feign'd religion, smooth hypocryfy. [end ;
 But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
 Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
 Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds. 875

I before all the daughters of my tribe
 And of my nation chose thee from among
 My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,
 Too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,
 Not out of levity, but over-power'd 880
 By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
 Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then
 Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband,
 'Then, as since then, thy country's foe profess'd?
 Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave 885
 Parents and country; nor was I their subject,
 Nor under their protection but my own,
 Thou mine, not theirs: if ought against my life
 Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
 Against the law of Nature, law of nations, 890
 No more thy country, but an impious crew
 Of men conspiring to uphold their state
 By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
 For which our country is a name so dear;
 Not therefore to be' obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee;
 To please thy gods thou didst it; gods unable 896
 To' acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
 But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
 Of their own deity, gods cannot be;
 Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd. 900
 These false pretexes and varnish'd colors failing,
 Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear?

DAL. In argument with men a woman ever

Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause. 904

SAM. For want of words no doubt, or lack of
Witness when I was worried with thy peals. [breath;

DAL. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.

Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson,
Afford me place to show what recompense 910

Tow'ards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided; only what remains past cure

Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
To' afflict thyself in vain: though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd 915

Where other senses want not their delights
At home in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which
Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.

I to the lords will intercede, not doubting 920

Their favorable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age 925

With all things grateful cheer'd, and so supply'd,
That what by me thou' hast lost thou least shalt miss.

SAM. No, no, of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain:
Nor think me so unwary or accurs'd, 930
To bring my feet again into the snare

Where once I have been caught; I know thy trains
 Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;
 Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
 No more on me have power, their force is null'd, 935
 So much of adder's wisdom I have learn'd
 To fence my ear against thy forceries.
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
 Lov'd, honor'd, fear'd me, thou alone could'st hate me
 Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me; 940
 How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
 Deceivable, in most things as a child
 Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
 And last neglected? How wouldst thou insult,
 When I must live uxorious to thy will 945
 In perfect thralldom, how again betray me,
 Bearing my words and doings to the lords
 To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile?
 'This jail I count the house of Liberty
 To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter. 950

DAL. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

SAM. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
 My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
 At distance I forgive thee, go with that;
 Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works 955
 It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
 Among illustrious women, faithful wives:
 Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood with the gold
 Of matrimonial treason: so farewell.

Volume III.

L.

DAL. I see thou art implacable, more deaf 960
To prayers than winds and seas, yet winds to seas
Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore :
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calm'd.
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing 965
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate ?
Bid go with evil omen and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounc'd ?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own. 970
Fame if not double-fac'd is double-mouth'd,
And with contrary blast proclames most deeds ;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild aery flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcis'd 975
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defam'd,
With malediction mention'd, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduc'd.
But in my country where I most desire, 980
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be nam'd among the famous
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose 985
Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb
With odors visited and annual flowers ;

Not less renown'd than in Mount Ephraim
 Jacl, who with inhospitable guile
 Smote Sifera sleeping through the temples nail'd. 990
 Nor shall I count it hainous to enjoy
 The public marks of honor and reward
 Conferr'd upon me for the piety
 Which to my country I was judg'd to' have shown.
 At this who ever envies or repines, 995
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

CHOR. She 's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
 Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

SAM. So let her go, God sent her to debase me,
 And aggravate my folly, who committed 1000
 To such a viper his most sacred trust
 Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

CHOR. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange
 After offense returning, to regain [power, 1005
 Love once possess'd, nor can be easily
 Repuls'd, without much inward passion felt
 And secret sting of amorous remorse.

SAM. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
 Not wedlock-treachery indang'ring life.

CHOR. It is not virtue, wisdom, valor, wit, 1010
 Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit
 That woman's love can win or long inherit;
 But what it is, hard is to say,
 Harder to hit,
 (Which way soever men refer it) 1015

Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or sev'n, though one should musing sit.

If any of these or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferr'd
Thy paranymp, worthless to thee compar'd, 1020
Successor in thy bed
Nor both so loosely disally'd
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had thorn the fatal harvest of thy head.

Is it for that such outward ornament 1025
Was lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
Capacity not rais'd to apprehend
Or value what is best

In choice, but ostent to affect the wrong? 1030
Or was too much of self-love mix'd,
Of constancy no root infix'd,
That either they love nothing, or not long?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heav'nly under virgin veil, 1035
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestin, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms 1040
Draws him awry inflav'd
With dotage, and his sense deprav'd
'To folly' and shameful deeds which ruin ends,

What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
Imbark'd with such a steers-mate at the helm? 1045

Favor'd of Heav'n who finds
One virtuous rarely found,
'That in domestic good combines:
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
But virtue which breaks through all opposition, 1050
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe, 1055
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lour:
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not sway'd
By female usurpation, or dismay'd. 1060

But had we best retire, I see a storm?

SAM. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

CHOR. But this another kind of tempest brings.

SAM. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

CHOR. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor tear
The bait of honied words; a rougher tongue 1066
Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty as is his pile high-bulk and proud.
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw 1071

'The sumptuous Dalila floting this way :
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

SAM. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes. 1074

CHOR. His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

HAR. I come not Samson, to condole thy chance,
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
'Though for no friendly' intent. I am of Gath,
Men call me Harapha, of stock renown'd
As Og or Anak and the Emims old 1080
'That Kiriathaim held, thou know'st me now
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd
Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,
'That I was never present on the place 1085
Of those encounters, where we might have try'd
Each other's force in camp or lifted field;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report. 1090

SAM. The way to know were not to see but taste.

HAR. Dost thou already single me? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tam'd thee. O that Fortune
Had brought me to the field, where thou art fam'd
To' have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw;
I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms, 1096
Or left thy carcase where the ass lay thrown :
So had the glory' of prowess been recover'd
To Palestine, won by a Philistine,

From the unforfein'd race, of whom thou bear'st
The highest name for valiant acts; that honor 1101
Certain to' have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

SAM. Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but
What then thou would'st, thou seest it in thy hand. [do

HAR. To combat with a blind man I disdain, 1105
And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

SAM. Such usage as your honorable lords
Afford me' assassinated and betray'd,
Who durst not with their whole united powers 1110
In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
Nor in the house with chamber ambushes
Close-banded durst attack me, no not sleeping
Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold
Breaking her marriage faith to circumvent me. 1115
Therefore without feign'd shifts let be assign'd
Some narrow place inclos'd, where fight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon, 1120
Vant-brass and greves, and gauntlet, add thy spear,
A weaver's beam, and sev'n-times-folded shield,
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outcries on thy clatter'd iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time while breath remains thee, 1126
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath to boast

Again in safety what thou would'st have done
To amson, but shalt never see Gath more.

HAR. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms,
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn, 1131
Their ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some Magician's art,
Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from
Feign'dst thy birth was giv'n thee in thy hair, [Heav'n
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Where bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back
Of chaf'd wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.

SAM. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;
My trust is in the living God, who gave me 1140
At my nativity this strength, diffus'd
No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,
'Than thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.

For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god, 1145
Go to his temple, invoke his aid
With solemnest devotion, spread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God 1150
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Offering to combat thee his champion bold,
With th' utmost of his godhead seconded:
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine. 1155

HAR. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be,
 'Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
 Quite from his people, and deliver'd up
 Into thy enemies' hand, permitted them
 To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee 1160
 Into the common prison there to grind
 Among the slaves and asses thy comrades,
 As good for nothing else, no better service
 With those thy boist'rous locks, no worthy match
 For Valor to assail, nor by the sword 1165
 Of noble warrior, so to stain his honor,
 But by the barber's razor best subdued.

SAM. All these indignities, for such they are
 From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
 Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me 1170
 Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon
 Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
 Gracious to re-admit the suppliant:
 In confidence whereof I once again
 Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight, 1175
 By combat to decide whose god is God,
 Thine or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

HAR. Fair honor that thou dost thy God, in trusting
 He will accept thee to defend his cause,
 A murderer, a revolter, and a robber. 1180

SAM. Tongue-doughty Giant, how dost thou prove me

HAR. Is not thy nation subject to our lords? [these?]
 Their magistrates confests'd it, when they took thee

As a league-breaker and a deliver'd bound
Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed 1185
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber stripp'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armed powers thee only seeking, 1190
To others did no violence nor spoil.

SAM. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe;
And in your city held my nuptial feast:
But your ill-meaning politician lords 1195
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who threatening cruel death constrain'd the bride
To wring from me and tell to them my secret,
That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd. 1200
When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanc'd,
I us'd hostility, and took their spoil
To pay my underminers in their coin,
My nation was subjected to your lords. 1205
It was the force of conquest; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquer'd can.
But I a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd
Single rebellion and did hostile acts. 1210
I was no private but a person rais'd

With strength sufficient and command from Heav'n
To free my country; if their servile minds
Me their deliverer sent would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for nought, 1215
Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heav'n assign'd,
And had perform'd it, if my known offense
Had not disabled me, not all your force:
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant 1220
Though by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

HAR. With thee a man condemn'd, a slave inroll'd,
Due by the law to capital punishment? 1225
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

SAM. Can'st thou for this, vain Boaster, to survey
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict? [me,
Come nearer, part not hence so slight inform'd;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee. 1230

HAR. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unus'd
Hear these dishonors, and not render death?

SAM. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van, [hand
My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free. 1235

HAR. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

SAM. Go baffled Coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,

Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down 1240
To th' hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

NAB. By Astaroth ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries in irons loaden on thee.

CHOR. His Giantship is gone somewhat crest-fall'n,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides, 1245
And lower looks, but in a sultry chase.

SAM. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
Though Fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

CHOR. He will directly to the lords, I fear, 1250
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to' afflict thee.

SAM. He must allege some cause, and offer'd fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept th' offer or not, 1255
And that he durst not plain enough appear'd.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,
If they intend advantage of my labors,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners. 1260
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end 1265
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

CHOR. Oh how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppress'd,
When God into the hands of their deliverer 1270

Puts invincible might

To quell the mighty of the earth, th'oppressor,

The brute and boist'rous force of violent men

Hardy and industrious to support

Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue 1275

The righteous and all such as honor Truth;

He all their ammunition

And feats of war defeats

With plain heroic magnitude of mind

And celestial vigor arm'd, 1280

Their armories and magazines contemns,

Renders them useless, while

With winged expedition

Swift as the lightning glance he executes

His errand on the wicked, who surpris'd 1285

Loose their defense distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise

Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,

Making them each his own deliverer,

And victor over all 1290

That Tyranny or Fortune can inflict.

Either of these is in thy lot,

Samson, with might indued

Above the sons of men; but fight bereav'd

May chance to number thee with those 1295

Whom patience finally must crown.

This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
 Laboring thy mind

More than the working day thy hands.

And yet perhaps more trouble is behind, 1300

For I descry this way

Some other tending, in his hand

A scepter or quaint staff he bears,

Comes on amain, speed in his look.

By his habit I discern him now 1305

A public Officer, and now at hand.

His message will be short and voluble.

OFF. Hebrews, the pris'ner Samson here I seek.

CHOR. His manacles remark him, there he sits.

OFF. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say;

This day to Dagon is a solemn feast, 1311

With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;

Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,

And now some public proof thereof require

To honor this great feast, and great assembly; 1315

Rise therefore with all speed and come along,

Where I will see thee hearten'd and fresh clad

To' appear as sits before th' illustrious lords.

SAM. Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell
 Our law forbids at their religious rites [them

My presence; for that cause I cannot come. 1321

OFF. This answer, be assur'd, will not content them.

SAM. Have they not sword-players, and every sort

Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
 Juglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics, 1325
 But they must pick me out with shackles tir'd,
 And over-labor'd at their public mill
 To make them sport with blind activity?
 Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
 On my refusal to distress me more, 1330
 Or make a game of my calamities?
 Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.

OFF. Regard thyself, this will offend them highly.

SAM. Myself? my conscience and internal peace.

Can they think me so broken, so debas'd 1335
 With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
 Will condescend to such absurd commands?
 Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
 And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
 To show them feats, and play before their god, 1340
 The worst of all indignities, yet on me
 Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

OFF. My message was impos'd on me with speed,
 Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution? 1344

SAM. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

OFF. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

SAM. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow' indeed.

CHOR. Consider, Samson; matters now are strain'd
 Up to the highth, whether to hold or break;
 He's gone, and who knows how he may report 1350
 Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?

Expect another message more imperious,
More lordly thund'ring than thou well wilt bear.

SAM. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair 1355
After my great transgression, so requite
Favor renew'd, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to idols;
A Nazarite in place abominable
Vaunting my strength in honor to their Dagon?
Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous, 1361
What act more execrably unclean, profane?

CHOR. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Phi-
Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean. [listines,

SAM. Not in their idol-worship, but by labor 1365
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power. [not.

CHOR. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile

SAM. Where outward force constrains, the sentence
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon, [holds.
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command. 1371
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, vent'ring to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind: which in his jealousy 1375
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me or thee
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

CHOR. Howthou wilt here come off surmounts my

SAM. Be of good courage, I begin to feel [reach.
Some rousing motions in me which dispose 1382
To something extraordinary my thoughts.

I with this messenger will go along,
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonor 1385
Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be ought of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last. 1389

CHOR. In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns.

OFF. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
And dar'st thou at our sending and command
Dispute thy coming? come without delay; 1395
Or we shall find such engins to assail
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmlier fasten'd than a rock.

SAM. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
Yet knowing their advantages too many, 1401
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection; 1405
And for a life who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men)

Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

OFF. I praise thy resolution: doff these links: 1410
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
'To favor, and perhaps to set thee free.

SAM. Brethren farewell; your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
'To see me girt with friends; and how the sight 1415
Of me as of a common enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
I know not: lords are lordliest in their wine;
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fir'd
With zeal, if ought religion seem concern'd; 1420
No less the people on their holy-days
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable:
Happen what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonorable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our law, my nation, or myself, 1425
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

CHOR. Go, and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the Heathen round; 1430
Send thee the angel of thy birth, to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire; that Spirit that first rush'd on thee 1435

In the camp of Dan
 Be efficacious in thee now at need.
 For never was from Heav'n imparted
 Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
 As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen. 1440
 But wherefore comes old Manoah in such haste
 With youthful steps? much livelier than ere while
 He seems: supposing here to find his son,
 Or of him bringing to us some glad news? 1444

MAN. Peace with you, Brethren; my inducement
 Was not at present here to find my son, [hither
 By order of the lords new parted hence
 To come and play before them at their feast.
 I heard all as I came, the city rings,
 And numbers thither flock, I had no will, 1450
 Lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly.
 But that which mov'd my coming now was chiefly
 To give ye part with me what hope I have
 With good success to work his liberty. 1454

CHOR. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
 With thee; say, reverend Sire, we thirst to hear.

MAN. I have attempted one by one the lords
 Either at home, or through the high street passing,
 With supplication prone and father's tears,
 To' accept of ransome for my son their pris'ner. 1460
 Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,
 Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
 That part most reverenc'd Dagon and his priests:

Others more moderate seeming but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and state 1465
They easily would set to sale: a third
More generous far and civil, who confess'd
They had enough reveng'd, having reduc'd
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,
The rest was magnanimity to remit, 1470
If some convenient ransom were propos'd.
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.

CHOR. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive, and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

MAN. His ransom, if my whole inheritance 1476
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And number'd down: much rather I shall chuse
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left. 1480
No, I am fix'd not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forego
And quit: not wanting him I shall want nothing.

CHOR. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all: 1486
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

MAN. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes, 1490
And view him sitting in the house, ennobled

With all those high exploits by him achiev'd,
 And on his shoulders waving down those locks
 That of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd:
 And I persuade me God had not permitted 1495
 His strength again to grow up with his hair
 Garrison'd round about him like a camp
 Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
 To use him further yet in some great service,
 Not to sit idle with so great a gift 1500
 Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.
 And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
 God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

CHOR. Thy hopes are not ill founded nor seem vain
 Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon 1505
 Conceive'd, agreeable to a father's love,
 In both which we, as next, participate.

MAN. I know your friendly minds and—O what
 Mercy of Heav'n, what hideous noise was that! [noise!
 Horribly loud, unlike the former shout. 1510

CHOR. Noise call you it or universal groan,
 As if the whole inhabitation perish'd!
 Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
 Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

MAN. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise:
 Oh it continues, they have slain my son. 1516

CHOR. Thy son is rather slaying them, that outcry
 From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

MAN. Some dismal accident it needs must be;

What shall we do, stay here or run and see? 1520

CHOR. Best keep together here, lest running thither
We unawares run into Danger's mouth.

This evil on the Philistines is fall'n;

From whom could else a general cry be heard?

The sufferers then will scarce molest us here, 1525
From other hands we need not much to fear.

What if his eye-sight (for to Israel's God

Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,

He now be dealing dole among his foes,

And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way? 1530

MAN. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

CHOR. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?

MAN. He can I know, but doubt to think he will;

Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.

A little stay will bring some notice hither. 1536

CHOR. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;

For evil news rides post, while good news baits.

And to our wish I see one hither speeding,

An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe. 1540

MES. O whither shall I run, or which way fly

The sight of this so horrid spectacle,

Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold?

For dire Imagination still pursues me.

But Providence or instinct of Nature seems, 1545

Or Reason though disturb'd, and scarce consulted,

To' have guided me aright, I know not how,

To thee first reverend Manoah, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror, 1550
So in the sad event too much concern'd.

MAN. The accident was loud, and here before thee
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not;
No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

MES. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter. 1556

MAN. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

MES. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall'n,
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n.

MAN. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
The desolation of a hostile city. 1561

MES. Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfeit,

MAN. Relate by whom.

MES. By Samson.

MAN. That still lessens 1565
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

MES. Ah Manoah, I refrain too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon;
Left evil tidings with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep. 1570

MAN. Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

MES. Take then the worst in brief, Samson is dead.

MAN. The worst indeed, O all my hopes defeated
To free him hence! but Death who sets all free
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge. 1575

What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd
 Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
 Abortive as the first-born bloom of Spring
 Nipt with the lagging rear of Winter's frost!
 Yet ere I give the reins to Grief, say first, 1580
 How dy'd he; death to life is crown or shame.
 All by him fell thou say'st, by whom fell he,
 What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

MES. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

MAN. Wearied with slaughter then or how? explain.

MES. By his own hands. 1586

MAN. Self-violence? what cause

Brought him so soon at variance with himself
 Among his foes?

MES. Inevitable cause 1590

At once both to destroy and be destroy'd;
 The edifice, where all were met to see him,
 Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

MAN. O lastly over-strong against thyself!

A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge. 1595
 More than enough we know; but while things yet
 Are in confusion, give us if thou canst,
 Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
 Relation more particular and distinct.

MES. Occasions drew me early to this city, 1600

And as the gates I enter'd with sun-rise,
 The morning trumpets festival proclam'd
 Through each high-street: little I had dispatch'd,

When
 Samson
 Proof
 I sorrow
 Not to
 The be
 Half-r
 With f
 Of fort
 The o
 On bar
 I amor
 The fe
 Had fi
 When
 Was S
 In the
 And t
 Both l
 Arche
 At fig
 Riste
 Who
 He pa
 Came
 Whic
 To h
 All w
 Vo

When all abroad was rumor'd that this day 1604
 Samson should be brought forth, to show the people
 Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;
 I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded
 Not to be absent at that spectacle.
 The building was a spacious theatre
 Half-round on two main pillars vaulted high, 1610
 With seats where all the lords and each degree
 Of sort might sit in order to behold;
 The other side was open, where the throng
 On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand;
 I among these aloof obscurely stood. 1615
 The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice [wine,
 Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and
 When to their sports they turn'd. Immediately
 Was Samson as a public servant brought,
 In their state livery clad; before him pipes 1620
 And timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
 Both horse and foot, before him and behind
 Archers, and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
 At sight of him the people with a shout
 Risted the air, clamoring their god with praise, 1625
 Who' had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
 He patient but undaunted where they led him,
 Came to the place, and what was set before him,
 Which without help of eye might be assay'd,
 To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd
 All with incredible, stupendous force, 1631

None daring to appear antagonist.
At length for intermission sake they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard) 1633
As over-tir'd to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the arched roof gave main support.
He unsuspecting led him; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclin'd, 1640
And eyes fast fix'd he stood, as one who pray'd,
Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd:
At last with head erect thus cry'd aloud,
Hitherto, Lords, what your commands impos'd
I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying, 1645
Not without wonder or delight beheld:
Now of my own accord such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater;
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.
This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd, 1650
As with the force of winds and waters pent,
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came and drew
'The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath, 1656
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
'Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this but each Philistian city round,

Met from all parts to solemnize this feast. 1660
 Samson with these immix'd, inevitably
 Pull'd down the same destruction on himself;
 The vulgar only scap'd who stood without.

CHOR. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
 Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd 1665
 'The work for which thou wast foretold
 To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
 Among thy slain self-kill'd
 Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
 Of dire Necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd 1670
 Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more
 Than all thy life hath slain before.

I SEMICHOR. While their hearts were jocund and
 Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine, [sublime,
 And fat regorg'd of bulls and goats, 1675
 Chaunting their idol, and preferring
 Before our living Dread who dwells
 In Silo his bright sanctuary:
 Among them he a spi'rit of Phrenzy sent,
 Who hurt their minds, 1680
 And urg'd them on with mad desire
 To call in haste for their destroyer;
 They only set on sport and play
 Unweetingly importun'd
 Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
 So fond are mortal men 1686
 Fall'n into wrath divine,

As their own ruin on themselves to' invite,
 Infensate left, or to sense reprobate,
 And with blindness internal struck. 1690

2 SEMICHOR. But he though blind of sight,
 Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,
 With inward eyes illuminated,
 His fiery virtue rous'd
 From under ashes into sudden flame, 1695
 And as an evening dragon came,
 Assailant on the perched roofs,
 And nests in order rang'd
 Of tame villatic fowl; but as an eagle
 His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads. 1700
 So Virtue giv'n for lost,
 Depress'd, and overthrown, as seem'd,
 Like that self-begotten bird
 In the Arabian woods imboist,
 That no second knows nor third, 1705
 And lay ere while a holocaust,
 From out her ashy womb now teem'd,
 Revives, resplendishes, then vigorous most
 When most unactive deem'd,
 And though her body die, her fame survives 1710
 A secular bird ages of lives.

MAN. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
 Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
 Like Samson, and heroically hath finish'd
 A life heroic, on his enemies 1715

Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
Through all Philistian bounds, to Iſrael
Honor hath left, and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion; 1720
To' himself and father's house eternal fame;
And which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
But favoring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail 1725
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Sok'd in his enemies' blood, and from the stream
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off 1731
The clotted gore. I with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend 1735
With silent obsequy and funeral train
Home to his father's house: there will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts inroll'd 1740
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts

To matchless valor, and adventures high :
 The virgins also shall on feastful days 1745
 Visit his tomb with flow'rs, only bewailing
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
 From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

CHOR. All is best, though we oft doubt
 What th' unsearchable dispose 1750
 Of highest Wisdom brings about,
 And ever best found in the close.
 Oft he seems to hide his face,
 But unexpectedly returns,
 And to his faithful champion hath in place 1755
 Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns
 And all that band them to resist
 His uncontrollable intent;
 His servants he with new acquit
 Of true experience from this great event 1760
 With peace and consolation hath dismiss'd,
 And calm of mind all passion spent. 1762

The End of Samson Agonistes.

COMUS, A MASK.

PRESENTED AT LUDLOW-CASTLE, M.DC.XXXIV, BEFORE THE
EARL OF BRIDGEWATER, THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

Eheu quid volui mittere mihi! floribus austrum
Perditus-----

To the Right Honourable

JOHN LORD VISCOUNT BRACKLEY,

Son and Heir apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater, &c.

My Lord,

*THIS Poem, which received its first occasion of birth from
yourself and others of your noble family, and much honor
from your own person in the performance, now returns
again to make a final dedication of itself to you. Although
not openly acknowledg'd by the Author, yet it is a legiti-
mate offspring, so lovely, and so much desired, that the often
copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends
satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it
to the public view; and now to offer it up in all rightful
devotion to those fair hopes, and rare endowments of your
much promising youth, which give a full assurance, to all
that know you, of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord,
to be the honor of your name, and receive this as your
own, from the hands of him who hath by many favors been
long obliged to your most honored parents, and as in this
representation your attendant Thyrsis, so now in all real
expression,*

Your faithful and most humble servant,

H. LAWES.

The Persons.

The attendant SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of
Thyrsis.

COMUS with his crew.

The LADY.

First BROTHER.

Second BROTHER.

SABRINA the Nymph.

The chief persons who presented were,

The Lord BRACKLY.

Mr. THOMAS EGERTON, his brother.

The Lady ALICE EGERTON.

COMUS.

The first SCENE discovers a wild wood.

The attendant SPIRIT descends or enters.

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insph'rd
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot, 5
Which men call Earth, and with low thoughted care
Confin'd, and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives
After this mortal change to her true servants 10
Amongst the enthron'd gods on fainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of Eternity:
To such my errand is; and but for such, 15
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapors of this sin-worn mold.

But to my task. Neptune besides the sway
Of every salt flood, and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove 20
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,
That like to rich and various gems inlay
The unadorned bosom of the Deep,
Which he to grace his tributary gods

By course commits to several government, 25
And gives them leave to wear their saphir crowns,
And wield their little tridents: but this ile,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-hair'd deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun 30
A noble peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
An old and haughty nation proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring nurs'd in princely lore
Are coming to attend their father's state, 35
And new-intrusted scepter; but their way
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wand'ring passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril, 40
But that by quick command from sovran Jove
I was dispatch'd for their defense and guard;
And listen why, for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower. 45

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crush'd the sweet poison of mis-used wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds list'd,
On Circe's island fell: (Who knows not Circe 50
The daughter of the Sun? whose charmed cup
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,

And downward fell into a groveling swine)
'This nymph that gaz'd upon his clustring locks,
With ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth, 55
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus nam'd,
Who ripe, and frolic of his full grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, 60
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And in thick shelter of black shades imbower'd
Excels his mother at her mighty art,
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass, 65
To quench the drouth of Phæbus, which as they taste,
(For most do taste through fond intemp'rate thirst)
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
Th' express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd
Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear, 70
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before, 75
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore when any favor'd of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star 80

I shoot from Heav'n, to give him safe convoy,
 As now I do : but first I must put off
 These my sky robes spun out of Iris' woof,
 And take the weeds and likeness of a swain,
 That to the service of this house belongs, 85
 Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
 And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,
 And in this office of his mountain watch,
 Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid 90
 Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
 Of hateful steps. I must be viewless now.

*COMUS enters with a charming rod in one hand, his glass
 in the other ; with him a rout of monsters, beaded like
 sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and
 women, their apparel glistering ; they come in making a
 riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

COM. The star that bids the shepherd fold,
 Now the top of Heav'n doth hold,
 And the gilded car of Day 95
 His glowing axle doth allay
 In the steep Atlantic stream,
 And the slope sun his upward beam
 Shoots against the dusky pole,
 Pacing toward the other goal 100
 Of his chamber in the East.
 Meanwhile welcome Joy, and Feast,

Midnight Shout, and Revelry,
 Tipfy Dance and Jollity.
 Braid your locks with rosy twine, 105
 Dropping odors, dropping wine.
 Rigor now is gone to bed,
 And Advice with scrupulous head,
 Strict Age, and four Severity
 With their grave faws in slumber lie. 110
 We that are of purer fire
 Imitate the starry quire,
 Who in their nightly watchful spheres,
 Lead in swift round the months and years.
 The sounds and seas with all their sinny drove, 115
 Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
 And on the tawny sands and shelves
 Trip the pert faeries and the dapper elves.
 By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,
 The wood-nymphs deck'd with daisies trim, 120
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
 What hath night to do with sleep?
 Night hath better sweets to prove,
 Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
 Come let us our rites begin, 125
 'Tis only day-light that makes sin,
 Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
 Hail goddess of nocturnal sport,
 Dark-veil'd Cotytto, to' whom the secret flame
 Of mid-night torches burns; mysterious dame, 130

That ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb
 Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,
 And makes one blot of all the air,
 Stay thy cloudy ebony chair,
 Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend 135
 Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
 Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
 The nice Morn on the Indian steep
 From her cabin'd loophole peep, 140
 And to the tell-tale sun descry
 Our conceal'd solemnity.
 Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
 In a light fantastic round.

The Measure.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace 145
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
 Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees;
 Our number may affright: Some virgin sure
 (For so I can distinguish by mine art)
 Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms, 150
 And to my wily trains; I shall ere long
 Be well-flock'd with as fair a herd as graz'd
 About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
 My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion, 155
 And give it false presentments, lest the place
 And my quaint habits breed astonishment,

And put the damsel to suspicious flight,
 Which must not be, for that's against my course;
 I under fair pretence of friendly ends, 160
 And well plac'd words of glozing courtesy
 Baited with reasons not unplaussible,
 Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
 And hug him into snares. When once her eye
 Hath met the virtue of this magic dust, 165
 I shall appear some harmless villager,
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
 But here she comes, I fairly step aside,
 And hearken, if I may, her business here.

The LADY enters.

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true, 170
 My best guide now; methought it was the sound
 Of riot and ill-manag'd merriment,
 Such as the jocond flute, or gamefome pipe
 Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
 When for their teeming flocks, and granges full, 175
 In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
 And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath
 To meet the rudeness, and swill'd insolence
 Of such late wassailers; yet O where else
 Shall I inform my unacquainted feet 180
 In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
 My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
 With this long way, resolving here to lodge
 Under the spreading favor of these pines,

O ij

Stept, as they said, to the next thicket side 185
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
'They left me then, when the grey-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed, 189
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labor of my thoughts; 'tis likeliest
They had engag'd their wand'ring steps too far,
And envious Darknefs, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me; else O thievish Night 195
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
'That Nature hung in Heav'n, and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the mislead and lonely traveller? 200
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud Mirth
Was rise, and perfect in my list'ning ear,
Yet nought but single darknefs do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies 205
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,
And aery tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound 210
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.—

O welcome pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,
 Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
 And thou unblemish'd form of Chastity; 215
 I see ye visibly, and now believe
 That he, the Supreme Good, to' whom all things ill
 Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
 Would send a glist'ring guardian if need were
 To keep my life and honor unassail'd. 220
 Was I deceiv'd, or did a fable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
 I did not err, there does a fable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
 And casts a gleam over this tufted grove. 225
 I cannot hallow to my brothers, but
 Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
 I'll venture, for my new inliven'd spirits
 Prompt me; and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG.

SWEET Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen 230
 Within thy aery shell,
 By flow Meander's margent green,
 And in the violet-embroider'd vale,
 Where the love-lorn nightingale
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well; 235
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
 That likest thy Narcissus are?

 O if thou have
 Hid them in some flow'ry cave,
 O iij

Tell me but where, 240
Sweet queen of Parly, daughter of the Sphere,
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heav'n's harmonies.
COM. Can any mortal mixture of Earth's mold
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment? 245
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal Air
To testify his hidden residence :
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of Silence, through the empty vaulted Night, 250
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smil'd! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flow'ry-kirtled Naiades
Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs, 255
Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
And lap it in Elysium; Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause :
Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense, 260
And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen. Hail foreign wonder, 265
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine

Dwell't here with Pan, or Silvan, by blest song
 Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
 To touch the prosp'rous growth of this tall wood. 270

L.A. Nay gentle Shepherd, ill is lost that praise
 That is address'd to unattending ears;
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
 How to regain my fever'd company,
 Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo 275
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

COM. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?

L.A. Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

COM. Could that divide you from near-ushering

L.A. They left me weary on a grassy turf. [guides?

COM. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why? 281

L.A. To seek i' th' valley some cool friendly spring.

COM. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?

L.A. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

COM. Perhaps forestalling Night prevented them.

L.A. How easy my misfortune is to hit! 286

COM. Imports their loss, beside the present need?

L.A. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

COM. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

L.A. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips. 290

COM. Two such I saw, what time the labor'd ox

In his loose traces from the furrow came,

And the swink'd hedger at his supper fat;

I saw them under a green mantling vine

That crawls along the side of yon small hill, 295

Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots ;
 Their port was more than human, as they stood :
 I took it for a faëry vision
 Of some gay creatures of the element,
 That in the colors of the rainbow live, 300
 And play i' th' plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
 And as I pass'd I worshipt ; if those you seek,
 It were a journey like the path to Heav'n,
 To help you find them.

L.A. Gentle Villager,

What readiest way would bring me to that place ? 305
 COM. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

L.A. To find out that, good Shepherd, I suppose,
 In such a scant allowance of star light,
 Would over task the best land-pilot's art,
 Without the sure guess of well-practis'd feet. 310

COM. I know each lane and every alley green,
 Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
 And every bosky bourn from side to side,
 My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood ;
 And if your stray-attendance be yet lodg'd, 315
 Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
 Ere morrow wake or the low-roofed lark
 From her thatcht pallat rouse ; if otherwise
 I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
 But loyal cottage, where you may be safe 320
 Till further quest.

L.A. Shepherd, I take thy word,

And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
 With smoky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
 And courts of princes, where it first was nam'd, 325
 And yet is most pretended: in a place
 Less warranted than this, or less secure,
 I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
 Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
 To my proportion'd strength. Shepherd, lead on. 330

The two BROTHERS.

E. BRO. Unmuffle ye faint Stars, and thou fair Moon,
 That wont'st to love the traveller's benizon,
 Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
 And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
 In double night of darkness and of shades; 335
 Or if your influence be quite damm'd up
 With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
 Though a rush candle from the wicker hole
 Of some clay habitation, visit us
 With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light, 340
 And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
 Or Tyrian Cynosure.

V. BRO. Or if our eyes
 Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear
 The folded flocks penn'd in their watled cotes,
 Or sound of past'ral reed with oaten stops, 345
 Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
 Count the night watches to his feathery dames,

"T would be some solace yet, some little cheering
In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.
But O that hapless virgin, our lost sister, 350
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillow'd head fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement, and affright, 356
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

E. BRO. Peace, Brother, be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils: 360
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestal his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of Fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion? 365
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in Virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that Goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not) 370
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self 375

Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
 Where with her best nurse Contemplation
 She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
 That in the various bustle of resort
 Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd. 380
 He that has light within his own clear breast
 May sit i' th' center, and enjoy bright day :
 But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
 Benighted walks under the mid-day sun ;
 Himself is his own dungeon.

V. BRO. 'Tis most true, 385
 That musing Meditation most affects
 The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
 Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
 And sits as safe as in a senate house ;
 For who would rob a hermit of his weeds, 390
 His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
 Or do his grey hairs any violence ?
 But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
 Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
 Of dragon-watch with uninchanted eye, 395
 To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit
 From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
 You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps
 Of misers' treasure by an outlaw's den,
 And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope 400
 Danger will wink on Opportunity,
 And let a single helpless maiden pass

Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste.
 Of night, or loneliness it recks me not;
 I fear the dread events that dog them both, 405
 Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
 Of our unowned sister.

E. BRO. I do not, Brother,
 Infer, as if I thought my sister's state
 Secure without all doubt or controversy:
 Yet where an equal poise of hope and fear 410
 Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is
 That I incline to hope, rather than fear,
 And gladly banish squint Suspicion.
 My sister is not so defenseless left
 As you imagin; she' has a hidden strength 415
 Which you remember not.

Y. BRO. What hidden strength,
 Unless the strength of Heav'n, if you mean that?

E. BRO. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
 Which if Heav'n gave it may be term'd her own:
 'Tis Chastity, my brother, Chastity: 420
 She that has that is clad in complete steel,
 And like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen
 May trace huge forests, and unharbour'd heaths,
 Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds,
 Where through the sacred rays of Chastity, 425
 No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer
 Will dare to soil her virgin purity:
 Yea there, where very Desolation dwells

By grotts, and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,
 She may pass on with unblench'd majesty, 430
 Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
 Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
 In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,
 Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
 That breaks his magic chains at curfew time, 435
 No goblin, or swart faery of the mine
 Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
 Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
 Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
 To testify the arms of Chastity? 440
 Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
 Fair silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,
 Wherewith she tam'd the brinded lioness
 And spotted mountain pard, but set at nought
 The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men 445
 Fear'd her stern frown, and she was Queen o' th' Woods.
 What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield,
 That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,
 Wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone,
 But rigid looks of chaste austerity, 450
 And noble grace that dash'd brute violence
 With sudden adoration, and blank awe?
 So dear to Heav'n is faintly Chastity,
 That when a soul is found sincerely so,
 A thousand liveried angels lacky her, 455
 Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,

And in clear dream, and solemn vision,
 Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
 Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants
 Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape, 460
 The unpolluted temple of the mind,
 And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
 Till all be made immortal: but when Lust,
 By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
 But most by leud and lavish act of sin, 465
 Lets in Defilement to the inward parts,
 The soul grows clotted by contagion,
 Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
 The divine property of her first being.
 Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp 470
 Oft seen in charnal vaults, and sepulchers,
 Lingring, and sitting by a new-made grave,
 As loath to leave the body that it lov'd,
 And link'd itself by carnal sensuality
 To a degenerate and degraded state. 475

Y. BRO. How charming is divine philosophy!
 Not harsh, and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
 But musical as is Apollo's lute,
 And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
 Where no crude surfeit reigns.

E. BRO. List, list, I hear 480
 Some far off hallow break the silent air.

Y. BRO. Methought so too; what should it be?

E. BRO. For certain

Either some one like us night-founder'd here,
Or else some neighbour wood-man, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows. 485

Y. BRO. Heav'n keep my sister. Again, again, and
Best draw, and stand upon our guard. [near;

E. BRO. I'll hallow;
If he be friendly, he comes well; if not,
Defense is a good cause, and Heav'n be for us.

The attendant SPIRIT, habited like a shepherd.
That hallow I should know, what are you? speak; 490
Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else.

SPI. What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again.

Y. BRO. O Brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.

E. BRO. Thyrsis? whose artful strains have oft delay'd
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, 495
And sweeten'd every muskrose of the dale.

How cam'st thou here, good Swain? hath any ram

Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,

Or straggling weather the pent flock forfook?

How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook?

SPI. O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy, 501
I came not here on such a trivial toy

As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth

Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth

That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought

To this my errand, and the care it brought. 506

But, O my virgin Lady, where is she?

How chance she is not in your company?

E. BRO. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame,
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came. 510

SPI. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

E. BRO. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prethee briefly

SPI. I'll tell ye; 'tis not vain or fabulous, [shew.
(Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance)

What the sage poets, taught by th' heav'nly Muse,
Story'd of old in high immortal verse, 516

Of dire Chimeras and enchanted isles,

And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;

For such there be, but Unbelief is blind.

Within the navel of this hideous wood, 520

Immur'd in cypress shades a forcerer dwells,

Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,

Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries,

And here to every thirsty wanderer

By sly enticement gives his baneful cup, 525

With many murmurs mix'd, whose pleasing poison

The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,

And the inglorious likeness of a beast

Fixes instead, unmolding Reason's mintage

Charácter'd in the face; this have I learnt 530

Tending my flocks hard by i' th' hilly crofts

That brow this bottom glade, whence night by night

He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl

Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,

Doing abhorred rites to Hecate 535

In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers.

Yet have they many baits, and guileful spells,
 To' inveigle and invite th' unwary sense
 Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
 This evening late, by them the chewing flocks 540
 Had ta'en their supper on the savory herb
 Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
 I sat me down to watch upon a bank
 With ivy canopied, and interwove
 With flaunting honey-suckle, and began, 545
 Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
 To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
 Till Fancy had her fill, but ere a close
 The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
 And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance; 550
 At which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a while,
 Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
 Gave respite to the drousy flighted steeds,
 That draw the litter of close-curtain'd Sleep;
 At last a soft and solemn breathing found 555
 Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
 And stole upon the air, that even Silence
 Was took ere she was ware, and with'd she might
 Deny her nature, and be never more
 Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear, 560
 And took in strains that might create a soul
 Under the ribs of death: but O ere long
 Too well I did perceive it was the voice
 Of my most honor'd Lady, your dear sister.

Amaz'd I flood, harrow'd with grief and fear, 565
 And O poor hapless nightingale thought I,
 How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
 Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
 Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
 Till guided by mine ear I found the place 570
 Where that damn'd wifard hid in sly disguise
 (For so by certain signs I knew) had met
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
 The idle's innocent Lady his wish'd prey,
 Who gently ask'd if he had seen such two, 575
 Supposing him some neighbour villager.
 Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess'd
 Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here,
 But further know I not.

Y. BRO. O Night and Shades, 580
 How are ye join'd with Hell in triple knot,
 Against th' unarmed weakness of one virgin
 Alone, and helpless! Is this the confidence
 You gave me, Brother?

E. BRO. Yes, and keep it still, 585
 Lean on it safely; not a period
 Shall be unaid for me: against the threats
 Of Malice or of Sorcery, or that power
 Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm,
 Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
 Surpris'd by unjust force, but not inthrall'd; 590
 Yea even that which Mischief meant most harm,

Shall in the happy trial prove most glory :
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last
 Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself, 595
 It shall be in eternal restless change
 Self-fed, and self-consumed : if this fail,
 The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
 And earth's base built on stubble. But come let's on.
 Against th' opposing will and arm of Heav'n 600
 May never this just sword be lifted up;
 But for that damn'd Magician, let him be girt
 With all the grisly legions that troop
 Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
 Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms 605
 'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
 And force him to restore his purchase back,
 Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
 Curs'd as his life.

SPI. Alas! good ventrous Youth,
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise; 610
 But here thy sword can do thee little stead;
 Far other arms, and other weapons must
 Be those that quell the might of hellish charms :
 He with his bare wand can unthred thy joints,
 And crumble all thy sinews.

E. BRO. Why prethee, Shepherd, 615
 How durst thou then thyself approach so near,
 As to make this relation ?

SPI. Care and utmost shifts

How to secure the Lady from surprisal,
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd 620
In every virtuous plant and healing herb,
That spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray :
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken ev'n to extasy, 625
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties :
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out; 630
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil :
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon; 635
And yet more med'cinal is it than that moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave;
He call'd it Hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all inchantments, mildew, blast, or damp,
Or ghastly furies' apparition. 640
I purs'd it up, but little reck'ning made,
Till now that this extremity compell'd :
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul inchanter though disguis'd, 645
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,

And yet came off: if you have this about you,
 (As I will give you when we go) you may
 Boldly assault the Necromancer's hall;
 Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood, 650
 And brandish'd blade rush on him, break his glass,
 And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
 But seize his wand; though he and his curs'd crew
 Fierce sign of battel make, and menace high,
 Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke, 655
 Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

E. BRO. Thyrsis, lead on apace, I'll follow thee,
 And some good angel bear a shield before us.

The scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS appears with his rabble, and the LADY sit in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.

COM. Nay, Lady, sit; if I but wave this wand,
 Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster, 660
 And you a statue, or as Daphne was
 Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

LA. Fool, do not boast,
 Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
 With all thy charms although this corporal rind
 Thou hast immanacl'd, while Heav'n sees good. 665

COM. Why are you vext, Lady? why do you frown?
 Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
 Sorrow flies far: see here be all the pleasures

That Fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns 670
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames, and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spi'rits of balm, and fragrant syrups mix'd,
Not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone 675
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs which Nature lent 680
For gentle usage, and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal like an ill borrower
With that which you receiv'd on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition 685
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tir'd all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted; but fair Virgin,
This will restore all soon.

L.A. 'Twill not, false traitor, 690
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
Thou toldst me of? What grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me! 695
Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver;

Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
 With visor'd falshood, and base forgery?
 And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
 With liquorish baits fit to insnare a brute? 700
 Were it a draft for Juno when she banquets,
 I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none
 But such as are good men can give good things,
 And that which is not good is not delicious
 To a well-govern'd and wise appetite. 705

COM. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
 To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
 And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
 Praising the lean and fallow Abstinence.
 Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth 710
 With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
 Covering the earth with odors, fruits, and flocks,
 Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable;
 But all to please, and sate the curious taste?
 And set to work millions of spinning worms, 715
 That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk
 To deck her sons, and that no corner might
 Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
 She hutcht th' all-worshipt ore, and precious gems
 To store her children with: if all the world 720
 Should in a pet of temp'rance feed on pulse,
 Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
 The All-giver would be' unthank'd, would be un-
 Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd, [prais'd,

And we should serve him as a grudging master, 725
 As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
 And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
 Who would be quite furcharg'd with her own weight,
 And strangled with her waste fertility, 729
 Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air darkt with
 The herds would over-multitude their lords, [plumes,
 The sea o'erfraught would swell, and th' unsought dia-
 Would so imblaze the forehead of the Deep, [monds
 And so bestud with stars, that they below
 Would grow inur'd to light, and come at last 735
 To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
 List Lady, be not coy, and be not cosen'd
 With that same vaunted name Virginity.
 Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
 But must be current, and the good thereof 740
 Consists in mutual and partaken blifs,
 Unfavoring in th' enjoyment of itself;
 If you let slip time, like a neglected rose,
 It withers on the stalk with languish'd head.
 Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown 745
 In courts, in feasts, and high solemnities,
 Where most may wonder at the workmanship;
 It is for homely features to keep home,
 They had their name thence; coarse complexions
 And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply 750
 The sampler, and to tease the hufwife's wool.
 What need a vermeil-tinctur'd lip for that,

Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the Morn?
 There was another meaning in these gifts, 754
 Think what, and be advis'd, you are but young yet.

L.A. I had not thought to have unlockt my lips
 In this unhallow'd air, but that this jugler
 Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
 Obtruding false rules prankt in Reason's garb.
 I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments, 760
 And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.

Impostor, do not charge most innocent Nature,
 As if she would her children should be riotous
 With her abundance; she good caterefs
 Means her provision only to the good, 765

That live according to her sober laws,
 And holy dictate of spare Temperance :
 If every just man, that now pines with want,
 Had but a moderate and beseeming share
 Of that which lewdly-pamper'd Luxury 770

Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
 Nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd
 In unsuperfluous even proportion,
 And she no whit incumber'd with her store,
 And then the Giver would be better thank'd, 775

His praise due paid ; for swinish Gluttony
 Ne'er looks to Heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
 But with befotted base ingratitude
 Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on ?
 Or have I said enough ? To him that dares 780

Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
 Against the sun-clad power of Chastity,
 Fain would I something say, yet to what end?
 Thou hast nor ear nor soul to apprehend
 The sublime notion, and high mystery 785
 That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
 And serious doctrin of Virginity,
 And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
 More happiness than this thy present lot.
 Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric, 790
 That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence,
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc'd;
 Yet should I try, the uncontrolled worth
 Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
 To such a flame of sacred vehemence, 795
 That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
 And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
 Till all thy magic structures rear'd so high,
 Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.

com. She fables not, I feel that I do fear 800
 Her words set off by some superior power;
 And though not mortal, yet a cold shudd'ring dew
 Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
 Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus
 To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble 805
 And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more,
 This is mere moral babble, and direct
 Against the canon laws of our foundation;
 I must not suffer this, yet 'tis but the lees

And settlings of a melancholy blood: 810
 But this will cure all strait, one sip of this
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.—

[*The BROTHERS rush in with swords drawn, wrest
 his glass out of his hand, and break it against the
 ground; his rout make sign of resistance, but are all
 driven in: the attendant SPIRIT comes in.*

SPI. What, have you let the false inchanter scape?
 O ye mistook, ye should have snatcht his wand. 815
 And bound him fast; without his rod revers'd,
 And backward mutters of dissevering power,
 We cannot free the lady that sits here
 In stony fetters fix'd, and motionless:
 Yet stay, be not disturb'd; now I bethink me, 820
 Some other means I have which may be us'd,
 Which once of Melibæus old I learnt,
 The soothest shepherd that ere pip'd on plains.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
 That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
 Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure; 826
 Whilome she was the daughter of Loarine,
 That had the scepter from his father Brute.
 She guiltless damsel fly'ing the mad pursuit
 Of her enraged stepdame Guendolen, 830
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
 That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.
 The water-nymphs that in the bottom play'd,

Held up their pearled wrists and took her in,
 Bearing her strait to aged Nereus' hall, 835
 Who piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,
 And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
 In nectar'd lavers strow'd with asphodil,
 And through the porch and inlet of each sense
 Dropt in ambrosial oils till she reviv'd, 840
 And underwent a quick immortal change,
 Made goddess of the river; still she retains
 Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
 Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs 845
 That the shrewd meddling elfe delights to make,
 Which she with precious vial'd liquors heals;
 For which the shepherds at their festivals
 Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
 And throw sweet garlands' wreaths into her stream
 Of pancies, pinks, and gaudy daffadils. 851
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
 The clasping charm, and thaw the numming spell,
 If she be right invok'd in warbled song,
 For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift 855
 To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
 In hard-befetting need; this will I try,
 And add the power of some adjuring verse.

SONG.

SABRINA fair,
 Listen where thou art sitting 860
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,

In twisted braids of lillies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
Listen for dear Honor's sake,
Goddeſs of the Silver lake.

865

Listen and ſave.

Listen and appear to us
In name of great Oceanus,
By th' earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace,
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wiſard's hook,
By ſcaly Triton's winding ſhell,
And old ſooth-faying Glaucus' ſpell,
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her ſon that rules the ſtrands,
By Thetis' tinfel-flipper'd feet,
And the ſongs of Sirens ſweet,
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith ſhe ſits on diamond rocks,
Sleeking her ſoft alluring locks,
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy ſtreams with wily glance,
Riſe, riſe, and heave thy roſy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our ſummons answer'd have.

870

875

880

885

Listen and ſave.

Qüj

SABRINA rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.

By the rusky-fringed bank, 890
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agat, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays; 895
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread;
Gentle Swain, at thy request 900
I am here.

SPR. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here distressed, 905
Through the force, and through the wile
Of unblest inchanter vile.

SAB. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help insnared chastity :
Brightest Lady, look on me; 910
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure,
'Thrice upon thy fingers' tip,
'Thrice upon thy rubied lip; 915
Next this marble venom'd seat,
Smear'd with gums of glutenous heat,

I touch with chaste palms moist and cold:
 Now the spell hath lost his hold;
 And I must haste ere morning hour
 To wait in Amphitrite's bower. 910

SABRINA descends, and the LADY rises out of her seat.

SPR. Virgin, daughter of Locrine
 Sprung of old Anchifes' line,
 May thy brimmed waves for this
 Their full tribute never miss 925
 From a thousand petty rills,
 That tumble down the snowy hills:
 Summer drouth, or singed air
 Never scorch thy tresses fair,
 Nor wet October's torrent flood 930
 Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
 May thy billows roll ashore
 The beryl, and the golden ore;
 May thy lofty head be crown'd
 With many a tower and terras round, 935
 And here and there thy banks upon
 With groves of myrrhe, and cinnamon.

Come, Lady, while Heav'n lends us grace,
 Let us fly this curfed place,
 Lest the Sorcerer us entice 940
 With some other new device.
 Not a waste or needles sound,
 'Till we come to holier ground;
 I shall be your faithful guide
 Through this gloomy covert wide, 945

And not many furlongs thence
 Is your father's residence,
 Where this night are met in state
 Many a friend to gratulate
 His wish'd presence, and beside 959
 All the swains that near abide,
 With jigs and rural dance resort;
 We shall catch them at their sport,
 And our sudden coming there
 Will double all their mirth and cheer; 955
 Come let us haste, the stars grow high,
 But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.
The scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the pre-
sent's castle; then come in country dancers, after them the
attendant SPIRIT, with the two BROTHERS and the LADY.

SONG.

SPI. BACK, Shepherds, back, enough your play,
 'Till next sun-shine holiday;
 Here be without duck or nod 960
 Other trippings to be trod
 Of lighter toes, and such court guise
 As Mercury did first devise
 With the mincing Dryades
 On the lawns, and on the leas. 965

This second Song presents them to their father and mother.

NOBLE Lord, and Lady bright,
 I have brought you new delight,
 Here behold so goodly grown
 Three fair branches of your own;

Heav'n hath timely try'd their youth, 970
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
 And sent them here through hard assays
 With a crown of deathless praise,
 To triumph in victorious dance
 O'er sensual folly, and intemperance. 975

The dances ended, the SPIRIT epiloguizes.

SPI. To the ocean now I fly,
 And those happy climes that lie
 Where Day never shuts his eye,
 Up in the broad fields of the sky :
 There I suck the liquid air 980
 All amidst the gardens fair
 Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
 That sing about the golden tree :
 Along the crisped shades and bowers
 Revels the spruce and jocund Spring, 985
 The Grace, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
 Thither all their bounties bring ;
 That there eternal Summer dwells,
 And west-winds with musky wing
 About the cedarn alleys fling 990
 Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
 Iris there with humid bow
 Waters the odorous banks, that blow
 Flowers of more mingled hue
 Than her purpled scarf can shew, 995
 And drenches with Elysian dew
 (Lift mortals, if your ears be true)

Beds of hyacinth and roses,
 Where young Adonis oft reposes,
 Waxing well of his deep wound 1000
 In slumber soft, and on the ground
 Sadly sits th' Assyrian queen;
 But far above in spangled sheen
 Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc'd,
 Holds his dear Psyche sweet intranc'd, 1005
 After her wand'ring labors long,
 Till free consent the gods among
 Make her his eternal bride,
 And from her fair unspotted side
 Two blisful twins are to be born, 1010
 Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done,
 I can fly, or I can run
 Quickly to the green earth's end,
 Where the bow'd welkin flow doth bend, 1015
 And from thence can soar as soon
 To the corners of the moon.

Mortals that would follow me,
 Love Virtue, she alone is free,
 She can teach ye how to clime 1020
 Higher than the sphery chime;
 Or if Virtue feeble were,
 Heav'n itself would stoop to her. 1023

The End of Comus.

L'ALLEGRO.

Hence loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn [holy,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights un-
Find out some uncouth cell, 5
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell. 10
But come thou goddess fair and free,
In Heav'n ycleap'd Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister Graces more 15
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some fager sing)
'The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying, 20
There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew,
Fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee Nymph, and bring with thee 25
Jest and youthful Jollity,

Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
 Nods and Becks, and wreathed Smiles,
 Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
 And love to live in dimple sleek; 30
 Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
 And Laughter holding both his sides.
 Come, and trip it as you go
 On the light fantastic toe,
 And in thy right hand lead with thee 35
 The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
 And if I give thee honor due,
 Mirth, admit me of thy crew
 To live with her, and live with thee,
 In unreprieved pleasures free; 40
 To hear the lark begin his flight,
 And singing startle the dull Night,
 From his watch-tower in the skies,
 Till the dappled Dawn doth rise;
 Then to come in spite of Sorrow, 45
 And at my window bid good morrow,
 Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
 Or the twisted eglantine:
 While the cock with lively din
 Scatters the rear of Darkness thin, 50
 And to the stack, or the barn-door,
 Stoutly struts his dames before:
 Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn
 Cheerly rouse the slumb'ring Morn,

From the side of some hoar hill, 55
 Through the high wood echoing shrill:
 Some time walking not unseen
 By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
 Right against the eastern gate,
 Where the great Sun begins his state, 60
 Rob'd in flames, and amber light,
 The clouds in thousand liveries dight,
 While the plow-man near at hand
 Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
 And the milkmaid singeth blithe, 65
 And the mower whets his scythe,
 And every shepherd tells his tale
 Under the hawthorn in the dale.
 Strait mine eye hath taught new pleasures
 Whilst the landkip round it measures, 70
 Ruffet lawns, and fallows gray,
 Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
 Mountains on whose barren breast
 The lab'ring clouds do often rest,
 Meadows trim with daisies pied, 75
 Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
 Towers and battlements it sees
 Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
 Where perhaps some beauty lies,
 The cynosure of neighb'ring eyes. 80
 Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,
 From betwixt two aged oaks,

Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
 Are at their savory dinner set
 Of herbs, and other country messes, 85
 Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
 And then in haste her bower she leaves,
 With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
 Or if the earlier season lead
 To the tann'd haycock in the mead. 90
 Sometimes with secure delight
 The upland hamlets will invite,
 When the merry bells ring round,
 And the jocond rebeck found
 To many a youth, and many a maid, 95
 Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
 And young and old come forth to play
 On a sunshine holy-day,
 'Till the live-long day-light fail;
 Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100
 With stories told of many a feat,
 How faery Mab the junkets ate,
 She was pincht and pull'd, she said,
 And he by frier's lanthorn led
 Tells how the drudging goblin swet, 105
 To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
 When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
 His shadowy flae hath thresh'd the corn
 That ten day-lab'ers could not end;
 Then lies him down the lubbar fiend, 110

And stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
 And crop-full out of doors he flings,
 Ere the first cock his matin rings.
 Thus done the tales, to bed they creep, 115
 By whisp'ring winds soon lull'd asleep.
 Towered cities please us then,
 And the busy hum of men,
 Where throngs of knights and barons bold
 In weeds of Pyace high triumphs hold, 120
 With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
 Rain influence, and judge the prize
 Of wit, or arms, while both contend
 To win her grace, whom all commend.
 There let Hymen oft appear 125
 In saffron robe, with taper clear,
 And Pomp, and Feast, and Revelry,
 With Mask and antique Pageantry,
 Such sights as youthful poets dream,
 On summer eves by haunted stream. 130
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,
 If Johnson's learned sock be on,
 Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
 Warble his native wood-notes wild.
 And ever against eating cares, 135
 Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
 Married to immortal Verse,
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce

In notes, with many a winding bout
Of link'd sweetness long drawn out, 140
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that ty
The hidden soul of Harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head 145
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heapt Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half regain'd Eurydice. 150
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live. 152

IL PENSEROSO.

Hence vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred,
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys?
Dwell in some idle brain, 5
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likeliest hovering dreams
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train. 10
But hail thou goddess, sage and holy,
Hail divinest Melancholy,
Whose faintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view 15
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauties' praise above 20
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended:
Yet thou art higher far descended,
Thrice bright-hair'd Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she (in Saturn's reign, 25
Such mixture was not held a stain)

Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of Jove. 30
Come pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of Cyprus lawn, 35
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes: 40
There held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast:
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet, 45
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Ay round about Jove's altar sing:
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure; 50
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The cherub Contemplation;

And the mute Silence hift along, 55
 'Lefs Philomel will deign a fong,
 In her sweeteft, faddeft plight,
 Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
 While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
 Gently o'er th' accustom'd oak; 60
 Sweet bird that fhunn'ft the noife of folly,
 Moft musical, moft melancholy!
 Thee chauntrefs oft the woods among
 I woo to hear thy even-fong;
 And miffing thee, I walk unseen 65
 On the dry fmooth-shaven green,
 To behold the wand'ring moon,
 Riding near her higheft noon,
 Like one that had been led aftray
 Through the Heav'n's wide pathlefs way, 70
 And oft, as if her head ſhe bow'd,
 Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
 Oft on a plat of rifing ground,
 I hear the far-off curfew found,
 Over ſome wide-water'd ſhore, 75
 Swinging flow with fullen roar;
 Or if the air will not permit,
 Some ſtill removed place will fit,
 Where glowing embers through the room
 Teach Light to counterfeit a gloom, 80
 Far from all refort of mirth,
 Save the cricket on the hearth,

Or the belman's drousy charm,
 To blefs the doors from nightly harm :
 Or let my lamp at midnight hour 85
 Be feen in fome high lonely tower,
 Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
 With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
 The fpirit of Plato to unfold
 What worlds, or what vaft regions hold 90
 The immortal mind that hath forfook
 Her manfion in this flefhly nook :
 And of thofe demons that are found
 In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
 Whofe power hath a true confent 95
 With planet, or with element.
 Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
 In fcepter'd pall come fweeping by,
 Prefenting Thebe's or Pelops' line,
 Or the tale of Troy divine, 100
 Or what (though rare) of later age
 Ennobled hath the bufkin'd ftage.
 But, O fad Virgin, that thy power
 Might raife Mufæus from his bower,
 Or bid the foul of Orpheus fing 105
 Such notes as warbled to the ftring,
 Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
 And made Hell grant what Love did feek.
 Or call up him that left half told
 The ftory of Cambufcan bold, 110



Of Camball, and of Algarfife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride; 115
And if ought else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear. 120
Thus Night oft see me in thy pale career
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not trickt and frounted as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kercheft in a comely cloud, 125
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rusling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves. 130
And when the sun begins to sing
His flaring beams, me goddess bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves
Of pine, or monumental oak, 135
Where the rude axe with heaved stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt,

There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look, 140
Hide me from Day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thie,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such comfort as they keep, 145
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep;
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in aery stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eye-lids laid. 150
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th' unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail 155
To walk the studious cloysters pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antic pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light. 160
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full voic'd quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies, 165
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.

And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that Heav'n doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old Experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures Melancholy give,
And I with thee will chuse to live.

170

176

ARCADES.

Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield, by some noble persons of her family, who appear on the scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song.

I. SONG.

Look Nymphs, and Shepherds look,
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook!

 This, this is she

5

To whom our vows and wishes bend;

Here our solemn search hath end.

Fame, that her high worth to raise,

Seem'd erst so lavish and profuse,

We may justly now accuse

10

Of detraction from her praise;

 Less than half we find express,

 Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,

In circle round her shining throne,

15

Shooting her beams like silver threads;

This, this is she alone,

 Sitting like a goddess bright,

 In the center of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,

20

Or the towered Cybele,

Mother of a hundred gods;
 Juno dares not give her odds;
 Who had thought this clime had held
 A deity so unparallel'd?

25

*As they come forward, the GENIUS of the wood appears,
 and turning toward them, speaks.*

GEN. Stay gentle Swains, for though in this disguise,
 I see bright honor sparkle through your eyes;
 Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
 Of that renowned flood, so often sung,
 Divine Alpheus, who by secret sluice
 Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;
 And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
 Fair silver-buskin'd Nymphs as great and good,
 I know this quest of yours, and free intent
 Was all in honor and devotion meant
 To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
 Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
 And with all helpful service will comply
 To further this night's glad solemnity;
 And lead ye where ye may more near behold
 What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
 Which I full oft amidst these shades alone
 Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon:
 For know by lot from Jove I am the power
 Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,

30

35

40

45

To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove
With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove.
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds, and blasting vapors chill:
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew, 50
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,
Or what the crofs dire-looking planet smites,
Or hurtful worm with canker'd venom bites.
When Ev'ning gray doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallow'd ground, 55
And early ere the odorous breath of Morn
Awakes the slumb'ring leaves, or tassell'd horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words, and murmurs made to bless; 60
But else in deep of night, when drowfiness
Hath lock'd up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears, 65
And turn the adamantin spindle round,
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law, 70
And the low world in measur'd motion draw
After the heav'nly tune, which none can hear
Of human mold with gross unpurged ear;

And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
 The peerless highth of her immortal praise, 75
 Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
 If my inferior hand or voice could hit
 Inimitable sounds, yet as we go,
 Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show,
 I will assay, her worth to celebrate 80
 And so attend ye toward her glittering state;
 Where ye may all that are of noble stem
 Approach and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

II. SONG.

O'er the smooth enamel'd green,
 Where no print of step hath been, 85
 Follow me as I sing,
 And touch the warbled string,
 Under the shady roof
 Of branching elm star-proof.
 Follow me, 90
 I will bring you where she sits,
 Clad in splendor as befits
 Her deity.
 Such a rural queen
 All Arcadia hath not seen. 95

III. SONG.

NYMPHS and Shepherds dance no more
 By sandy Ladon's lillied banks,
 On old Lycæus or Cyllene hoar
 Trip no more in twilight ranks,
 Though Erymanth your loss deplore, 100
 A better foil shall give ye thanks.
 From the stony Mænalus
 Bring your flocks, and live with us,
 Here ye shall have greater grace,
 To serve the Lady of this place. 105
 Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
 Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
 Such a rural queen
 All Arcadia hath not seen. 109

LYCIDAS.

In this monody the Author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drown'd in his passage from Chester, on the Irish seas, 1637, and by occasion foretels the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their hightb.

YET once more, O ye Laurels, and once more
 Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never fere,
 I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
 And with forc'd fingers rude
 Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year. 5
 Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
 Compels me to disturb your season due:
 For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew 10
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
 He must not flote upon his watry bier
 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin then, Sisters of the Sacred Well, 15
 That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
 Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
 Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,
 So may some gentle Muse
 With lucky words favor my destin'd urn, 20
 And as he passes turn,

And bid fair peace be to my fable shroud:
 For we were nurs'd upon the self-same hill,
 Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.

Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd 23
 Under the opening eye-lids of the Morn,
 We drove a-field, and both together heard
 What time the gray fly winds her sultry horn,
 Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night
 Oft till the star that rose at evening bright, 30
 Tow'ards Heav'n's descent had slop'd his west'ring
 Mean while the rural ditties were not mute, [wheel
 Temper'd to th' oaten flute,
 Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with cloven heel
 From the glad sound would not be absent long, 35
 And old Damatas lov'd to hear our song.

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
 Now thou art gone, and never must return!
 Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
 With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown, 40
 And all their echoes mourn.
 The willows, and the hazel copses green,
 Shall now no more be seen
 Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
 As killing as the canker to the rose, 45
 Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
 Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
 When first the white thorn blows;
 Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherds' ear, 49

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless
Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas? [deep
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream: 55
Ay me! I fondly dream
Had ye been there, for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself for her enchanting son,
Whom universal Nature did lament, 60
When by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His goary visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with incessant care
To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade, 65
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neera's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spi'rit doth raise 70
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears, 75
And flits the thin spun life. But not the praise,
Phœbus reply'd, and touch'd my trembling ears;

Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil
 Nor in the glist'ring foil
 Set off to th' world, nor in broad Rumor lies, 80
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
 Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honor'd flood, 85
 Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds,
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood:

But now my oat proceeds,
 And listens to the herald of the sea
 That came in Neptune's plea; 90

He ask'd the Waves, and ask'd the fellon Winds,
 What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
 And question'd every gust of rugged winds
 That blows from off each beaked promontory;
 They knew not of his story, 95

And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
 That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd,
 'The air was calm, and on the level brine
 Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.

It was that fatal and perfidious bark 100
 Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing flow,
 His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge 105
 Like to that sanguin flower inscrib'd with woe.

Ah! who hath reft (quoth he) my deareft pledge?
 Laft came, and laft did go,
 The pilot of the Galilean lake,
 Two mafsy keys he bore of metals twain, 110
 (The golden opes, the iron fhuts amain)
 He fhook his miter'd locks, and ftern befpoke,
 How well could I have spar'd for thee, young Swain,
 Enow of fuch as for their bellies' fake
 Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold? 115
 Of other care they little reck'ning make,
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feaft,
 And shove away the worthy bidden gueft; [hold
 Blind mouths! that fcarce themfelves know how to
 A fheep-hook, or have learn'd ought elfe the leaft 120
 That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
 What reck's it them? what need they? they are fped;
 And when they lift, their lean and flashy fongs
 Grate on their fcramnel pipes of wretched ftraw;
 The hungry fheep look up, and are not fed, 125
 But fwell'n with wind, and the rank mift they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion fpread:
 Befides what the grim wolf with privy paw
 Daily devours apace; and nothing faid,
 But that two-handed engin at the door 130
 Stands ready to fmite once, and fmite no more.

Return Alpheus, the dread voice is paft
 That fhunk thy fstreams; return Sicilian Mufe,
 And call the vales, and bid them hither caft

Their bells, and flourets of a thousand hues. 135
Ye Valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparsely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamel'd eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honied showers, 140
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy fret with jet,
The glowing violet, 145
The musk-rose, and the well attir'd woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
To strow the laureat herse where Lycid lies.
For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurl'd, 155
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou to our moist vows deny'd,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old, 160
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks tow'ard Namancos and Bayona's hold;

Look homeward angel now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye Dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woful Shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead, 166

Sunk though he be beneath the watry floor;

So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,

And yet anon repairs his drooping head,

And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore 170

Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:

So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,

'Thro' the dear might of him that walk'd the waves,

Where other groves and other streams along,

With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175

And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,

In the blest kingdoms meek of Joy and Love.

There entertain him all the saints above,

In solemn troops and sweet societies,

That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180

And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.

Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;

Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,

In thy large recompense, and shalt be good

To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills,

While the still Morn went out with sandals gray,

He touch'd the tender stops of various quills,

With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;

And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills, 193
And now was dropt into the western bay;
At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue:
'To morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

From the APOLLO PRESS,
by the MARTINS,
Dec. 13. 1779.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.



